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PAGE 96

GARDENS ILLUSTRATED

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A bright Christmas

How to make your garden sparkle in December

FESTIVE INSPIRATION

Perfect gifts for gardeners

Make your own natural garlands

Jingle bells

16 fabulous winter-flowering clematis

12 >
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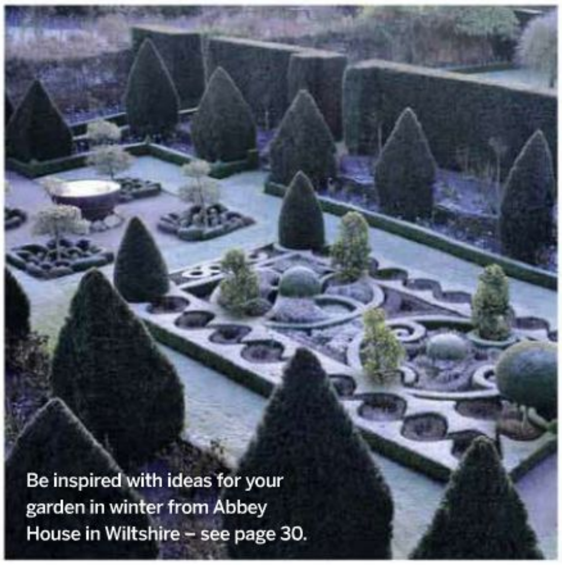
editor's letter

Winter is the most difficult season in which to make a garden look good. From a design point of view there are two schools of thought: either you plant specifically for seasonal interest (be it berries, leaf or stem colour) or acknowledge it as a period of down-time and enjoy the waning forms of plants that have already peaked. In this issue we've got great examples of both styles, including Abbey House in Wiltshire (page 30) and designer Tom Stuart-Smith's private garden in Hertfordshire (page 46). We also visit Southern Hemisphere Botanics in Scotland (page 68), where two remarkable women have created a haven for plant-lovers, full of rare and unusual plants. The delicate flowers of clematis are lovely at any time of year, but if you'd like to find a variety that will light up your garden in winter, turn to page 54 for nurseryman John Hoyland's choice of the best winter-flowerers. And if you find yourself missing being outdoors, why not bring a bit of nature's beauty inside with our step-by-step guide (on page 38) to some stunning Christmas garlands? Finally, with the festive season upon us, we've got some great ideas for presents for gardeners (page 20) and don't forget you could keep a friend (or yourself) happy all year round with a subscription to GARDENS ILLUSTRATED. Turn to page 28 for our special seasonal offer.

Wishing you a very happy Christmas,

Juliet

Make your own natural Christmas garlands with our guide on page 38.



Be inspired with ideas for your garden in winter from Abbey House in Wiltshire – see page 30.

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HEIDI LERKENFELDT, JASON INGRAM

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Clematis cirrhosa var. *balearica* by Jason Ingram – turn to our *Plant profile* on page 54 for another 15 winter-flowering clematis

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save 30%

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- Win a pair of VIP tickets for the RHS Chelsea Flower Show – turn to page 96 for details
- £5 off Christmas garlands from the Real Cut Flower Garden, PLUS 10% off Sarah Raven's Christmas catalogue – see page 96

* Discount rate and free gift offer apply to UK readers only

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Jan–Jun 2010
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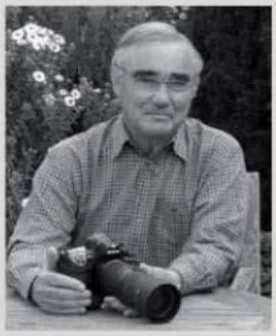
WINNER

Contributors

"*Traditional woodland techniques are inspiring and can work really well for trees in the garden.*"

CAMILLA PHELPS

London-based garden writer Camilla is a former editor of the BBC gardening website. She has been in the business for ten years and describes her job as "one of the best in the world". She explores the technique of coppicing on page 62.



"*I am proud to have become a part of the garden world and to have encouraged younger photographers.*"

JERRY HARPUR

Born in Northamptonshire in 1930, Jerry's illustrious career spans 60 years and has taken him all around the world. His photographs have illustrated over 300 books and few are better qualified to judge Garden of the Year on page 74.

"*The garden I nominated for this prestigious award is a year-round feast of colour and interest.*"

CAMILLA SWIFT

A freelance editor and writer, Camilla's love of gardening began as a child when she helped her grandfather spray greenfly-ridden roses. An avid reader of garden books, her own garden, The Pant, appeared in issue 167. Camilla joins this year's judges for Garden of the Year, page 74.

"*Working as a garden photographer is a huge privilege and I put my whole heart into it.*"

HEIDI LERKENFELDT

Born in Copenhagen where she is still based, Heidi completed her photography apprenticeship in 2004. Since then, she has contributed to magazines and catalogues around the world. Be inspired by her guide to sophisticated and subtle wreaths on page 38.

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letters

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star letter

Paying penance with flowers

I live with my sister; we are both retired and love to garden together. Unfortunately, my sister is prone to using colourful language when she snags her finger on a thorn or falls from her kneeler. So, earlier this year I proposed that she perform an act of penance to atone for her unnecessary cussing. My sister agreed, and each time she profaned she walked to the end of the garden where she would plant a bulb. It was a lovely surprise when, this spring, I watched a strange arrangement of daffodils gradually appear in my garden which, when they flowered, clearly spelled out the words 'Oh Sugar!'
Holly Treadwell, Sewards End, Saffron Walden

Gardening challenges

Tuscan trials

I have been gardening on my Tuscan hillside for 15 years. I am always surprised by the number of 'ghosts' I find. The fig tree I thought I had eradicated has returned, a 'lost' dahlia blooms brightly, and that small piece of mint I meant to grab in June has spread beyond belief.

I also bask in the joy of the happy accidents – my *Ballota*, *Aster* and *Phlomis* combination, *Lonicera pileata* looking splendid with *Convolvulus cneorum*. But I mourn lost favourites – my irises were eaten by porcupines. Gardening continually humbles, excites, frustrates and awes me.
Nancy Leszczynski, Tuscany, Italy

Reader recommends

Internet plant advice

I read with interest Jilly Charkin's letter (issue 167, page 16) about discovering that the star performer in her garden, *Cornus kousa*, produces delicious edible fruits. A number of plants that we grow as ornamentals can be grown as food-producers – although their fruits are unfamiliar to us now, the same was once true of runner beans. Of course, there are also plenty of poisonous and inedible plants that are grown as ornamentals, and it pays to make sure that you have correctly identified the plant and are cautious with your first taste tests. I find the Plants for a Future database (www.pfaf.org) invaluable for this purpose – it gives *Cornus kousa* a five-star rating for taste.
Emma Cooper, Oxfordshire

Gardener's question

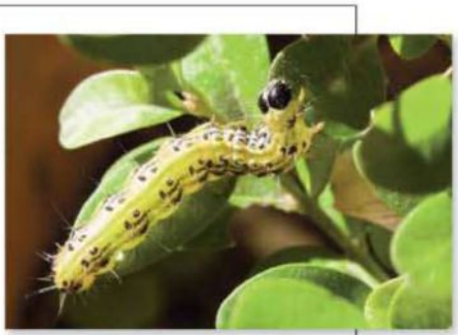
Can I visit collection?

Is it possible to go and see Luigi Valducci's *Brugmansia* National Collection (issue 165, page 60)?
Simon Cox, Northamptonshire

- Luigi Valducci's collection is open by appointment. 61 Green Lane, Bayston Hill, Shrewsbury, Shropshire SY3 0NR. Tel 07921 368968 (daytime) or 01743 872030 (evening). Email valducci@vwclub.net or see www.nccpg.com for details.

Gardener's question

Box pest alert



With a short and relatively wet summer prematurely drawing to an end, I spotted that some of my box was being nibbled, and that one small plant was now devoid of leaves. I pulled the poor thing out and wandered off to dead-head some roses. A few weeks later I was chatting to a friend who remarked that a new pest was ravenously eating her box hedging. The culprit is apparently a caterpillar, *Diaphania perspectalis* [pictured above]. Armed with a picture of the offending species, my son and daughter found at least 50 in our medium-sized garden.

What should readers do if they spot signs of this pest?
Sara Thomas, Zürich, Switzerland

Response from Pippa Greenwood, panellist on *Gardeners' Question Time*:
Diaphania perspectalis is of East Asian origin and was first seen in Germany in 2007. Last year it was found in two separate locations in southern England. As you found, the larvae cause extensive defoliation of box, often combined with webbing. In Germany it seems to overwinter as a cocoon, spun between box leaves, and has been found on *Buxus microphylla*, *B. microphylla* var. *insularis*, *B. sinica* and *B. sempervirens*. In Asia, though, it appears to be a problem on other species, too, including *Ilex purpurea*, *Euonymus japonicus* and *Euonymus alata*.

If you have identified *D. perspectalis* in your garden, pick off eggs and larvae by hand, and you could also treat with a caterpillar spray if necessary.

WILDLIFE GMBH / ALAMY

We reserve the right to edit correspondence. □

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READER TRIP TO GERMANY

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After three days in Berlin, the party makes the short drive to Potsdam and visits Sanssouci Gardens, the epicentre of an ensemble of palaces and parks built for Frederick the Great during the 18th century. A particular highlight will be the early 20th-century garden of influential nurseryman and writer Karl Foerster, famed for his naturalistic garden style. On a more contemporary note there's also a visit to Bornstedter-Feld Park, a once-derelict military training ground now reclaimed as a public green space.

The tour continues with a visit to Wörlitz Park and its unforgettable 18th-century 'garden kingdom' created by Prince Franz von Anhalt-Dessau, before the final flourish of a special visit to the research grounds and private garden of one of Germany's most innovative horticulturists, Prof. Dr Wolfram Kircher, much of whose work focuses on sustainability. □

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OUT AND ABOUT

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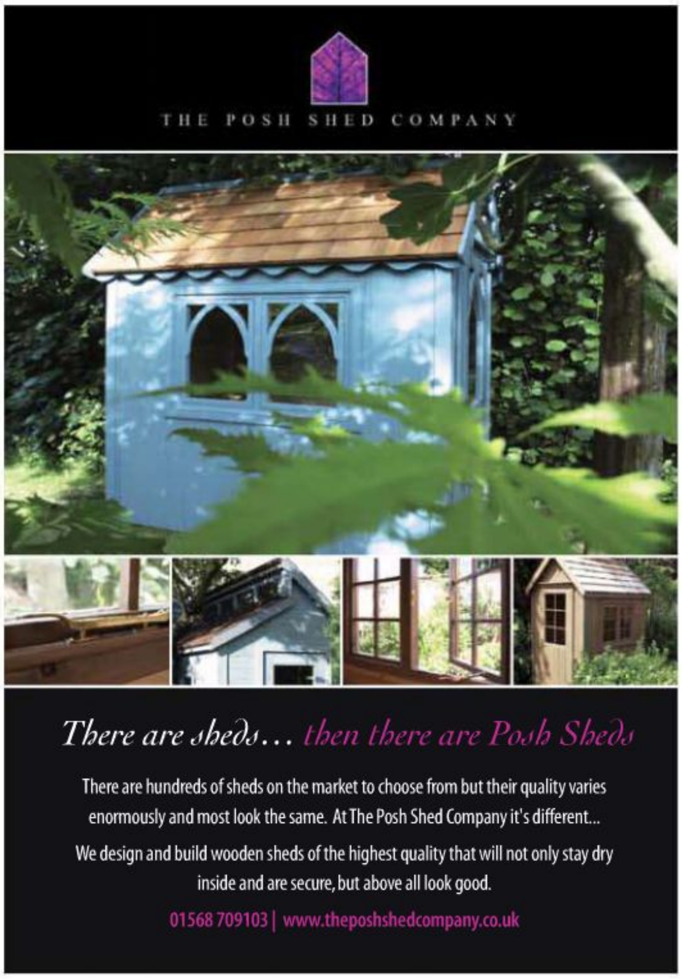
11 December, 10am-3.30pm, £45. Cambridge University Botanic Gardens, 1 Brookside, Cambridge CB2 1JE. Tel 01223 331875, www.botanic.cam.ac.uk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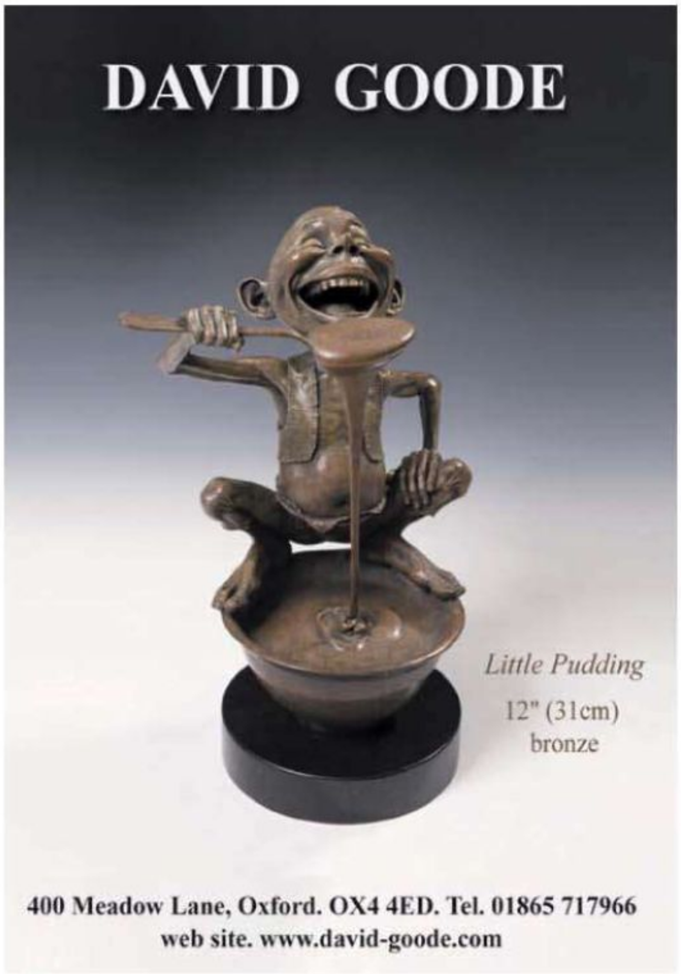
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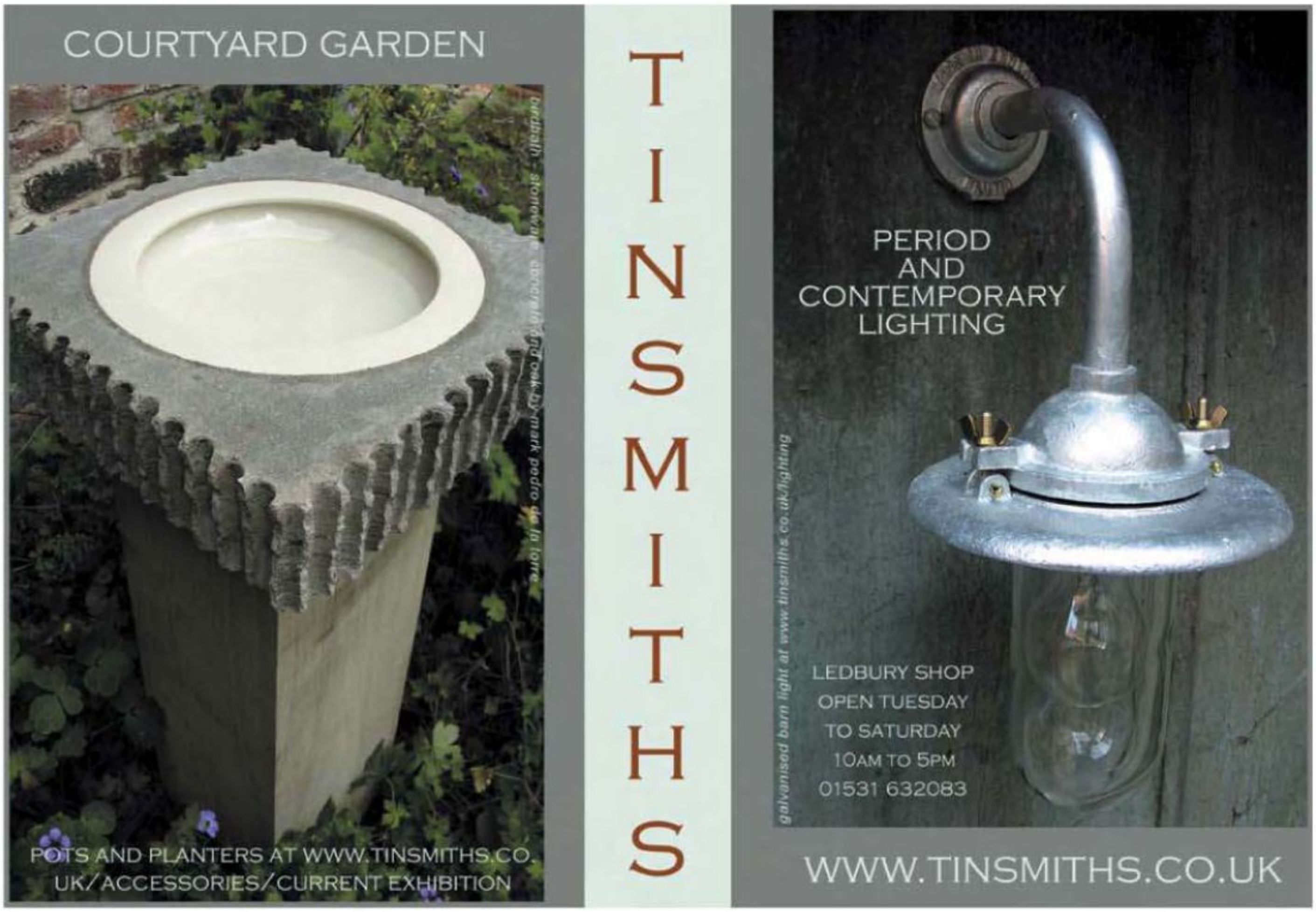
COURTYARD GARDEN

birdbath - stoneware, concrete and oak by mark pedro de la torre

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Media

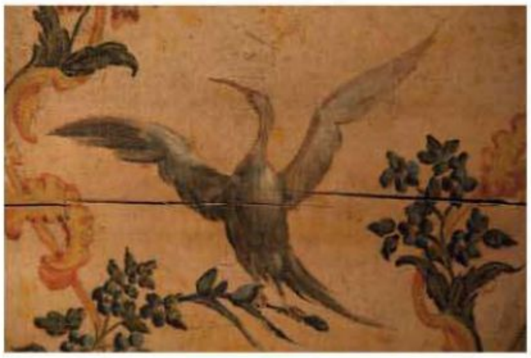
TELEVISION

- ***Gardeners' World*** is currently on its winter break.
- ***Edwardian Farm*** Experiencing farming life at the turn of the 20th century. Wednesdays until early February with a break for Christmas, 8pm, BBC2.
- ***Alan's Garden Secrets*** Alan Titchmarsh continues his look at the gardens he believes have most influenced British gardening heritage. Wednesdays 23 and 30 November, 8pm, BBC2. You can find the previous week's episode on iPlayer at www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer
- ***The Science of Gardening*** Carol Klein invites top plant scientists to her garden to help explain processes such as germination, pollination, photosynthesis and soil profile. 26 November, 8.30pm, BBC2.

RADIO

- ***Gardeners' Question Time*** Topical tips and advice, plus a look at houseplants, a review of the year's top gardening books and a visit to Alnwick Gardens in Northumberland. Fridays 3pm, BBC Radio 4 (repeated Sundays 2pm). There's no programme on 24 December.
- ***Saving Species*** Brett Westwood reports on topical stories of bio-diversity, conservation and natural history. Tuesdays, 11am, Radio 4. www.bbc.co.uk/savingspecies
- ***Food and Farming Awards*** Sheila Dillon of Radio 4's *The Food Programme* announces this year's Food and Farming Awards, celebrating the best in well-produced and local food. 26 November, 9am, Radio 4. See *Nosey Parker*, page 14.

NOTE Programme details are correct at time of going to press but may be subject to changes.



EXHIBITION

Garden birds

Go bird spotting in the parterre gardens of the Bowes Museum at Barnard Castle. Inspired by the many birds featured in the museum's textile, art, ceramic and furniture collections (above left), metal smith Laura Baxter has created a series of laser-cut metal birds (below left). Each bird is spotlit by solar-powered lighting to give a filigree lantern effect to the gardens at dusk. There are more than 60 birds from tiny wrens to exotic phoenix.

- *A Garden of Lantern Birds*, until 30 January 2011. Bowes Museum, Barnard Castle, Co Durham DL12 8NP. Tel 01833 690606, www.thebowesmuseum.org.uk. The event is part of a national project. See www.museumaker.com for details.

This jolly fir tree card holder is perfect for displaying your Christmas cards – or winter gardening reminders. £18 from Plümo. Tel 0844 557 3590, www.plumo.co.uk

PEACE
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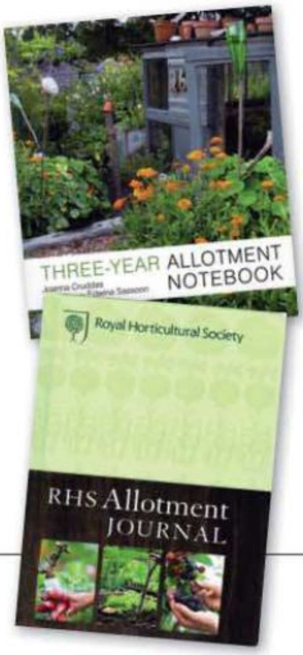
PLAN YOUR GROWING

An allotment planner can help newer gardeners keep track of seasonal tasks. The sturdy *RHS Allotment Journal* (Mitchell Beazley, £12.99) gives monthly growing tips, practical techniques and recipe ideas for your fresh crops. For a more visual feast try the *Three-Year Allotment Notebook* (Frances Lincoln, £12.99). Good for notes year on year, but it's the selection of images here that stands out, giving you plenty of inspiration for your plot.



MATTHEW ANDREWS

NOSEY PARKER

Beccy Speight

The National Trust's sustainable food champion heads the Food Glorious Food project, urging gardeners to grow their own

What is your earliest garden/gardening memory? Climbing out of my bedroom window at about the age of five (I'd been sent to my room for some misdeed) and falling straight into the new herb bed my mother had planted below.

What training have you had? My background is in management consultancy so I've had absolutely no horticultural training – and it shows. But I've been very lucky to work alongside some great gardeners at the National Trust.

Who has inspired you? Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall, Jamie Oliver, Monty Don – all people who actively 'get' that growing your own food provides spiritual refreshment as well as physical; and can be good for society in so many ways.

What is Food Glorious Food? We wanted to run a campaign at our properties and via the internet that inspired people to make choices around the food they eat – we wanted people to grow, buy and eat more sustainably produced local and seasonal food.

What was your first grow-your-own success Cress on blotting paper on the window sill.

What is your favourite winter seasonal recipe? It would have to be what my mum called 'old bones' or Irish stew. You can't beat a stew on a cold day.

What books are on your bedside table? It's a tottering stack. *Waste* by Tristram Stuart is in there waiting for me, and I'm also dipping in to *Tender* by Nigel Slater.

Not a lot of people know this about me... I also love singing jazz. You should hear me practising down among the pumpkins.

Go to www.foodgloriousfood.org.uk for more details

BBC The Food Glorious Food campaign has been shortlisted in the BBC Radio 4 Food and Farming Awards. For more about the finalists go to www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/features/ffa/2010/. Find out who won on 26 November, Radio 4, 9am.

Diary

- ***South Downs walks*** Celebrate the natural beauty, wildlife and heritage of the UK newest National Park. 3, 4, 5, 9, 11, 12, 14, 18, 27, 29 December. For details call 0300 303 1053 or go to www.southdowns.gov.uk
- ***Festive decorations workshop*** Make a wreath and learn how to wire a festive garland and mistletoe ball. 6-8 December, 10am-12.30pm and 1.30-4pm on Monday and Tuesday, 1.30-4pm on Wednesday, £50. Long Barn, Bishops Sutton Road, Alresford, Hampshire SO24 9EJ. Book on 01962 733200, or more details at www.longbarn.co.uk
- ***Waltham Place seasonal walk*** Enjoy the garden's winter highlights. There's also the opportunity to make a Christmas wreath. 11 December, 2pm, £6 (extra £2.50 for wreath making). Booking essential. Meet Ormandy Centre, Waltham Place, Church Hill, White Waltham, Berkshire SL6 3JH. Tel 01628 825517, www.walthamplace.com
- ***Cotehele's Christmas garland*** 18m long and made of thousands of dried flowers from the gardens. Until 31 December. £9.60, child £4.80 Cotehele, St Dominick, Saltash, Cornwall PL12 6TA. Tel 01579 351346, www.nationaltrust.org.uk

3 *of the best websites*

FROM *THE GOOD WEB GUIDE*

www.farmingfutures.org.uk
Looking at how our food producers can farm sustainably in the face of economic and environmental challenges.

www.growveg.com
Online garden planner that lets you draw up a plan and decide how best to plant it. Growing guides also available.

www.walkit.com
Here's a route finder that helps you plan journeys by foot giving details of quieter routes and CO_2 saving.

Searching for secret gardens

London's popular Open Squares Weekend is looking for new participants. If you know of a hidden gem tucked away in a residential or business areas, or are part of a community group who cares for a garden space, you could join some 200 gardens open to the public for one summer's weekend. For details of how to apply call 020 7839 3969 or go to www.opensquares.org. Entries by 28 February. The open weekend for 2011 is on 11-12 June.

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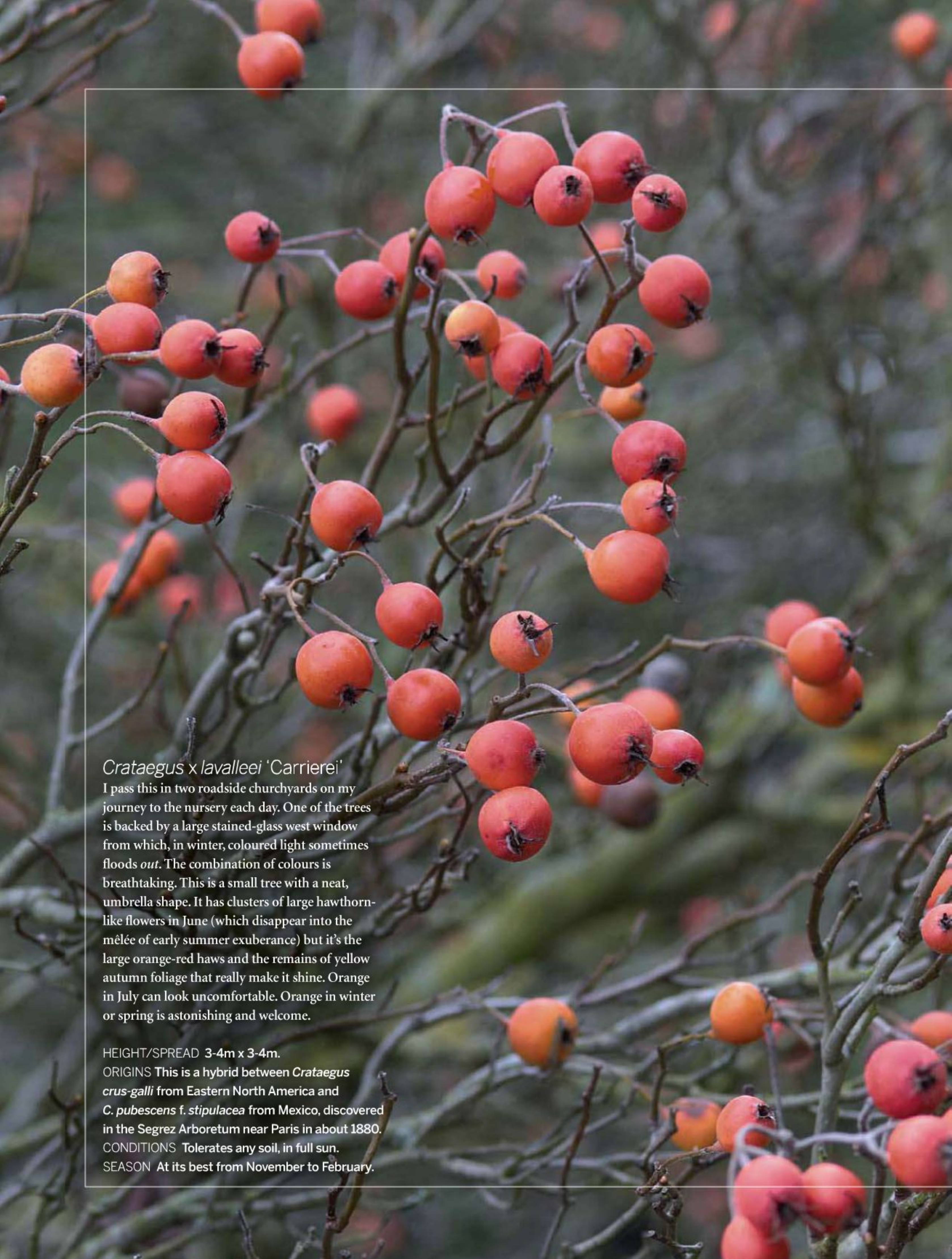


Crataegus x *lavalleei* 'Carrierei'

I pass this in two roadside churchyards on my journey to the nursery each day. One of the trees is backed by a large stained-glass west window from which, in winter, coloured light sometimes floods *out*. The combination of colours is breathtaking. This is a small tree with a neat, umbrella shape. It has clusters of large hawthorn-like flowers in June (which disappear into the mêlée of early summer exuberance) but it's the large orange-red haws and the remains of yellow autumn foliage that really make it shine. Orange in July can look uncomfortable. Orange in winter or spring is astonishing and welcome.

HEIGHT/SPREAD **3-4m x 3-4m.**
ORIGINS **This is a hybrid between *Crataegus crus-galli* from Eastern North America and *C. pubescens* f. *stipulacea* from Mexico, discovered in the Segrez Arboretum near Paris in about 1880.**
CONDITIONS **Tolerates any soil, in full sun.**
SEASON **At its best from November to February.**

December plants

Nine outstanding plants that look lovely on a crisp winter's day

WORDS **BOB BROWN** PHOTOGRAPHS **TORIE CHUGG**

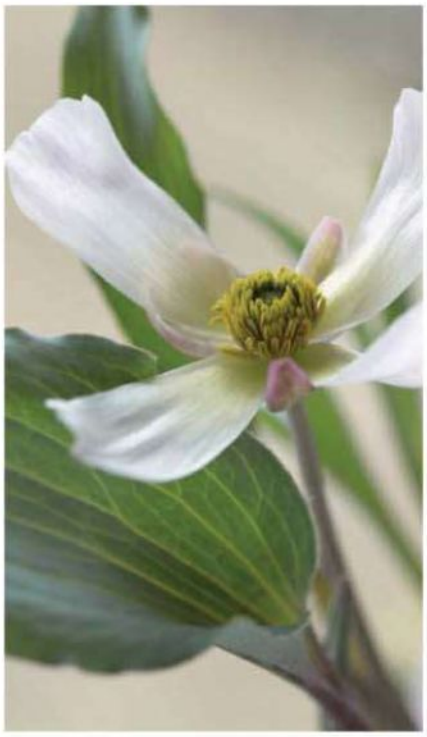
CHARLIE HOPKINSON

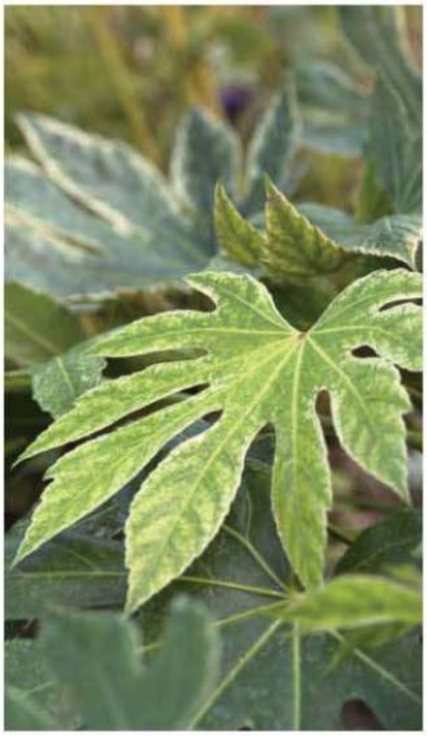
Bob Brown owns Cotswold Garden Flowers, a mecca for plant lovers, which stocks a huge range of rare and beautiful plants

Ranunculus calandrinioides

I've experienced winter in Morocco. I'm sure it can be mild and sunny, but harsh and cold is also possible. This plant comes from medium altitudes in the Atlas Mountains. When customers see it in full flower in winter, understandably they ask, "Is it hardy?" The answer (slight pause), "Yes," invariably gets the reply, "What do you mean?" The answer should more properly be, "It might die of summer wet but never of winter cold." Mine is planted under a hawthorn, which sucks up any surplus soil moisture in summer. Last winter it sailed through -22°C in the winter.

HEIGHT/SPREAD 20cm x 20cm.
ORIGINS Morocco.
CONDITIONS Well-drained, quite dry soil in partial shade; good under deciduous trees.
SEASON November to February.





Fatsia japonica 'Spider's Web'

People can have bad experiences with fatsias. They don't like sun so need a really shady place to grow or the leaves will be a sickly yellow. They don't like wet either, so the obvious place to put them is dry and shady places, under trees – which is good because most people have space in such places. Ordinary fatsias also get too big for many gardeners, lose their shape and become gawky. This is a compact form with white variegation that covers the entire leaf (when mature) except for a green, web-like pattern. The flowers are whiter than normal, from white stems, and flower in mid-December.

HEIGHT/SPREAD 1.5m x 90cm in eight years.
ORIGINS Japan.
CONDITIONS Dry shade, in any soil.
SEASON All year but especially in December.

NEXT TIME
This month's selection concludes Bob Brown's series, but *Nurseryman's favourites* returns in February with John Hoyland of Pioneer Plants.

Chionochloa rubra

I am constantly poking fun at what seem to be dead brown grasses. Mostly they aren't grasses at all but sedges, members of the *Cyperaceae* family from New Zealand. *C. rubra* actually *is* a dead-looking grass, yet it's one of my top 30 plants. In the depths of winter (or in the middle of a cold spring) it graces the nursery and makes me smile. The colour is a glossy brown (if it was really dead it would be a limp straw colour). The shape is a graceful fountain. It moves in the wind and shimmers in sunlight. Fabulous.

HEIGHT/SPREAD 1m x 1m.
ORIGINS Seaside to high mountains in South Island, New Zealand.
CONDITIONS Any soil, in sun or partial shade. Give it room to develop its mature shape.
SEASON All year but it excels between November and April.

Oxalis 'Sunset Velvet'

If you've seen gold and red oxalis cascading from the planted-up urns on the terraces at Powis Castle and wondered what it was, then this is the orange-coloured form of it. Gold-flowered and red-stemmed, the foliage starts green with a purple flush before turning orange. How extreme is that? It doesn't run. It doesn't make bulbils or seed and, if you leave it out in the garden, it will die of frost. Use it liberally all summer and autumn and make cuttings in a pot for a sunny frost-free windowsill to enjoy in winter as well. ANYBODY can root it.

HEIGHT/SPREAD 10cm x 30cm.
ORIGINS Mexico.
CONDITIONS This is a tender plant, to be enjoyed in pots and planters on a sheltered windowsill during winter.
SEASON All year; wonderful in deep winter.

Correa reflexa var. *nummulariifolia*

I am careful when offered plants from alpine growers because my rampant, overgrown gardening style (and clay soil) quickly kills them. I still haunt alpine nurseries because occasionally they offer a small plant that will grow into something big enough. Keith Lever of Aberconwy Nursery introduced this small shrub into horticulture. It's much better than other correas – compact, shapely, hardy, and the flowers look outwards, not down. It sits in pots by my front door from Christmas to May.

HEIGHT/SPREAD 50 x 60cm.
ORIGINS Native to Tasmania.
CONDITIONS Ordinary, well-drained soil in full sun or partial shade.
SEASON Flowers from December to May. Russet-flushed foliage, October to June.

Places to visit

Bob Brown names some of his favourite gardens and other places to see plants at their best

December and January are the best months to appreciate garden structure and design rather than plants. Sadly, some of the most pertinent gardens are closed at this time. **Stourhead** in Wiltshire *is* open. It is one of the most romantic gardens I know, so you will enjoy the landscape even while walking briskly to keep warm. In December it should still have some autumn colour – especially in the rufous oaks that usually hold their dead foliage. Even on the most leaden day the lake will reflect patterns of grey and white.

Stourton, Warminster,
Wiltshire BA12 6QD.
Open daily, 9am until dusk.
Tel 01747 841152,
www.nationaltrust.org.uk

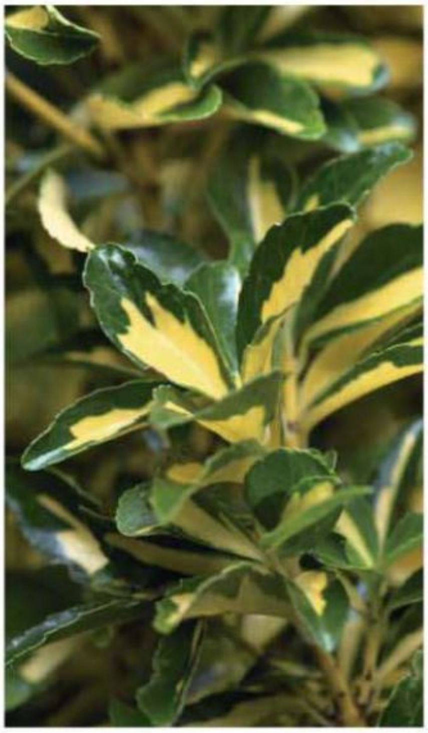
Stourhead

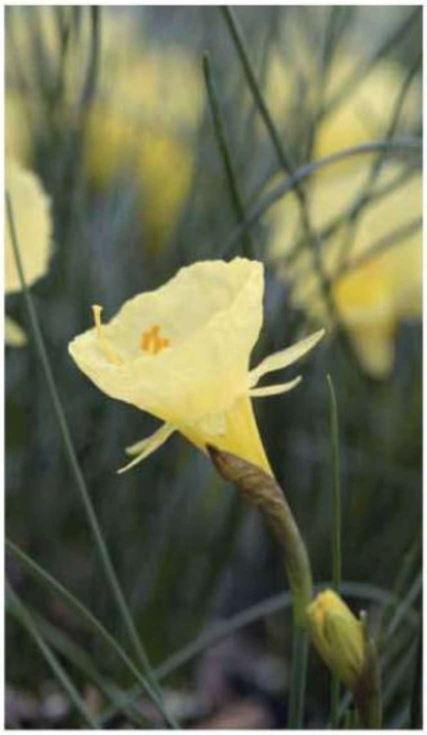
STEPHEN ROBSON / NTPL

Euonymus japonicus 'Extase'

I grew up with the mother of this plant, where it was used for hedging on hot London streets. In 2005 it was 30cm high. It is now 40cm high and thicker. It's still in a pot and I think it will remain in a pot. In December it's one of the stars of my minute sunny yellow garden and greets me at the end of very drear afternoons just as the light is disappearing. It is the mundane raised to the level of the spiritual and the only recommendation on the original label was *Useful for planting on graves.*

HEIGHT/SPREAD 35cm x 30cm.
ORIGINS Selected by the Dutch from a Japanese species.
CONDITIONS Plant in pots that can be moved at will to highlight adjacent plants. Any soil, in full sun or partial shade.
SEASON All year, but especially midwinter.





Narcissus romieuxii 'Julia Jane'

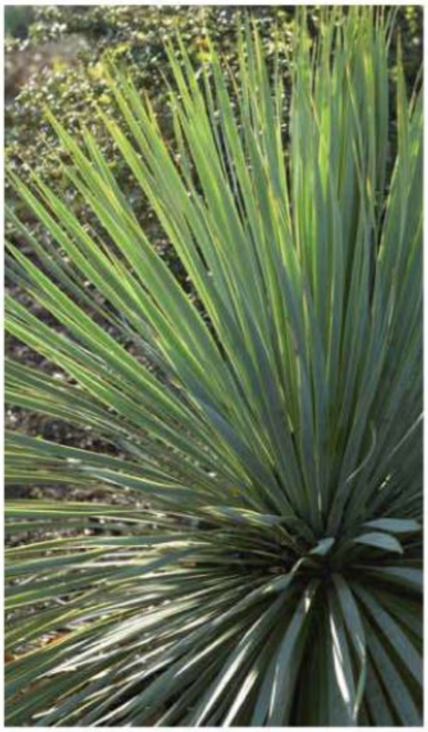
You must plant these bulbs where you can get to within smelling distance of the flowers. It is a nice, quietly coloured, early (and the earliness is encouraging), wonderfully scented daffodil with neat, dark, green hair-like foliage. A pot stood on a low wall would do. The perfume is strong but not brash, combining musk and fresh fruit. You'll come back to it time and time again until satiated (when all your scent receptors will be full). Any form of *Narcissus romieuxii* is good but this is superlative.

HEIGHT/SPREAD 15cm x 12cm.
ORIGINS Morocco.
CONDITIONS Pots and planters, left outside in full sun or partial shade. Use gritty compost with more grit or pebbles on top to protect flowers from soil-splash.
SEASON Late November to February.

Yucca rostrata

Shape and texture become more important in winter. This has wonderful, spherical rosettes of narrow, bluish evergreen foliage (eventually on branched trunks like a superlative miniature palm, and with bright white flower heads above the leaves). It is easy to grow and hardy even in wet climates and waterlogged clay soils. You can buy it like tree ferns, as a stump with a tuft on top, but establishing such a plant would be a nightmare and require more skill than I have. I grow mine from seed collected at high altitude by Ron Ratko of Northwest Native Seed. But then I am patient. Ask my wife.

HEIGHT/SPREAD 80cm x 80cm in 10 years.
ORIGINS High altitudes in Northern Mexico and parts of California, Arizona and Texas.
CONDITIONS All soils, in full sun.
SEASON All year but especially in winter.



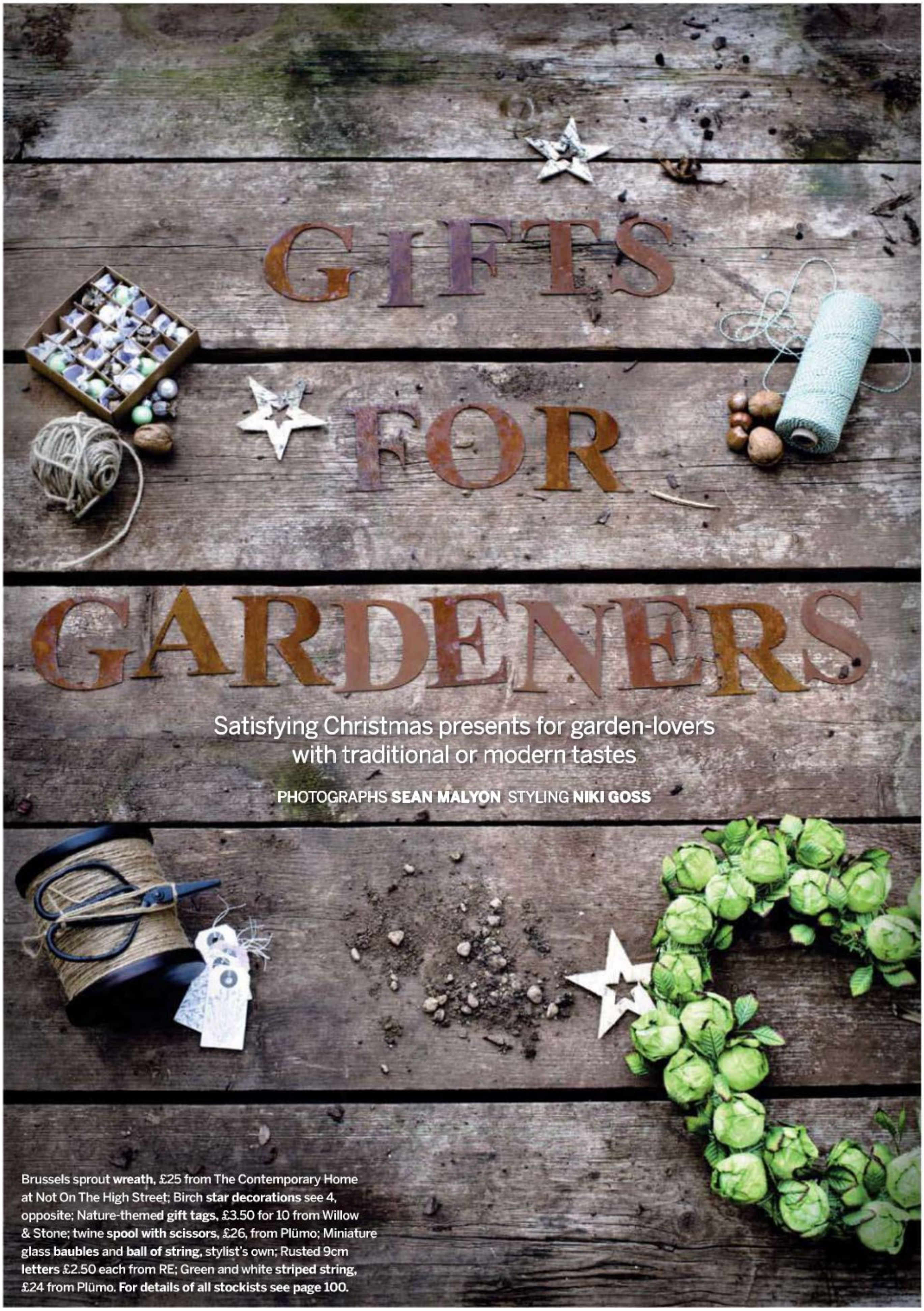
Don't let a garden's popularity put you off. For years I veered away from **Chatsworth** for that reason. Designed over centuries, it succeeds in being magical, exciting and satisfying in any season. Please go, or go again. Bakewell, Derbyshire DE45 1PP. Open daily until 23 December, 11am till dusk. Tel 01246 565300, www.chatsworth.org

If the weather is awful visit a botanic garden, where you can retreat to warm glasshouses if necessary. I favour Kew and Cambridge – both have enough to engage me for at least half a day, but your local botanic garden (Birmingham for me) is bound to be worth visiting too. **Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew.** Open daily. Richmond, Surrey TW9 3AB. Tel 020 8332 5655, www.kew.org **Cambridge Botanic Garden**. Open daily. 1 Brookside, Cambridge CB2 1JE. Tel 01223 336265, www.botanic.cam.ac.uk **Birmingham Botanical Gardens**. Open daily. Edgbaston, Birmingham B15 3TR. Tel 0121 454 1860, www.birminghambotanical gardens.org.uk

Cambridge University Botanic Garden

HOWARD RICE/GPL/ALAMY

GIFTS FOR GARDENERS



Satisfying Christmas presents for garden-lovers with traditional or modern tastes

PHOTOGRAPHS **SEAN MALYON** STYLING **NIKI GOSS**

Brussels sprout **wreath,** £25 from The Contemporary Home at Not On The High Street; Birch **star decorations** see 4, opposite; Nature-themed **gift tags,** £3.50 for 10 from Willow & Stone; twine **spool with scissors,** £26, from Plümo; Miniature glass **baubles** and **ball of string,** stylist's own; Rusted 9cm **letters** £2.50 each from RE; Green and white **striped string,** £24 from Plümo. **For details of all stockists see page 100.**

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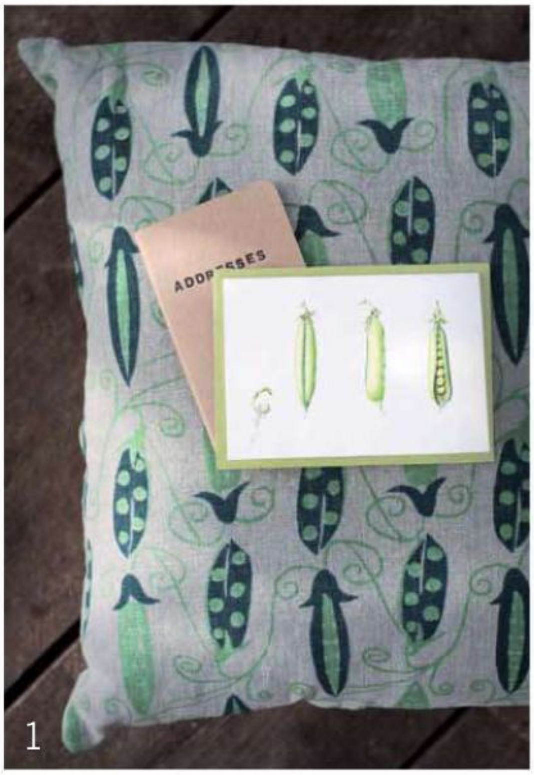
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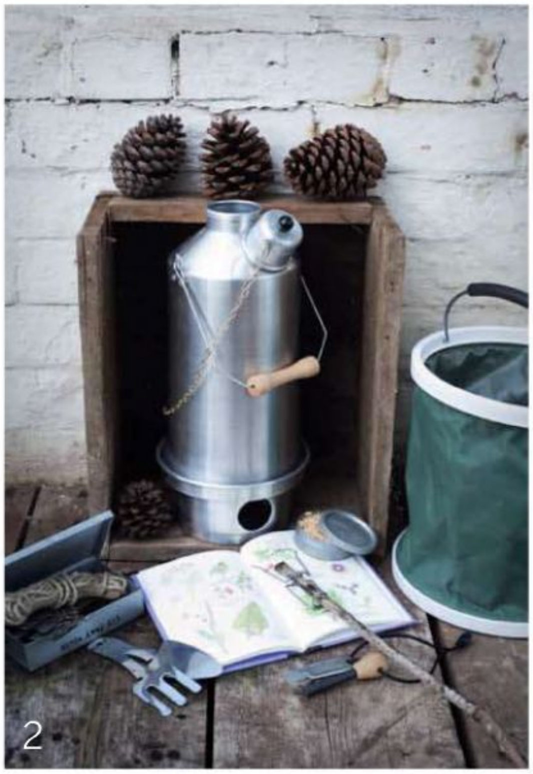
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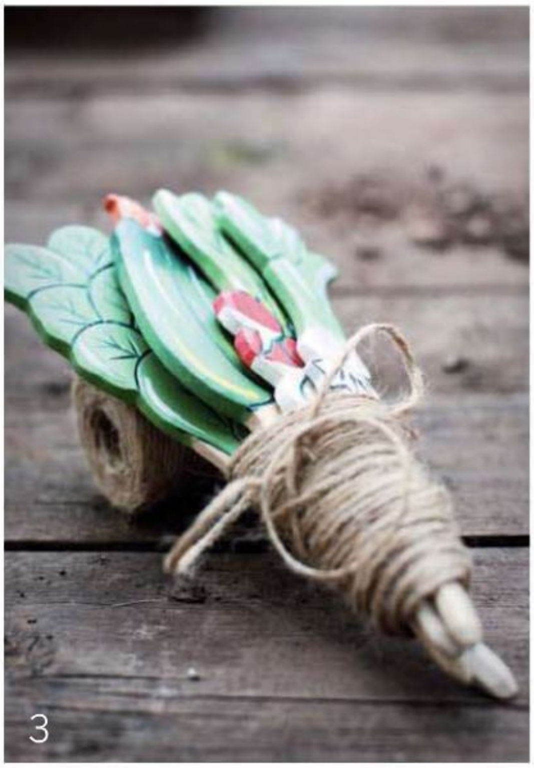
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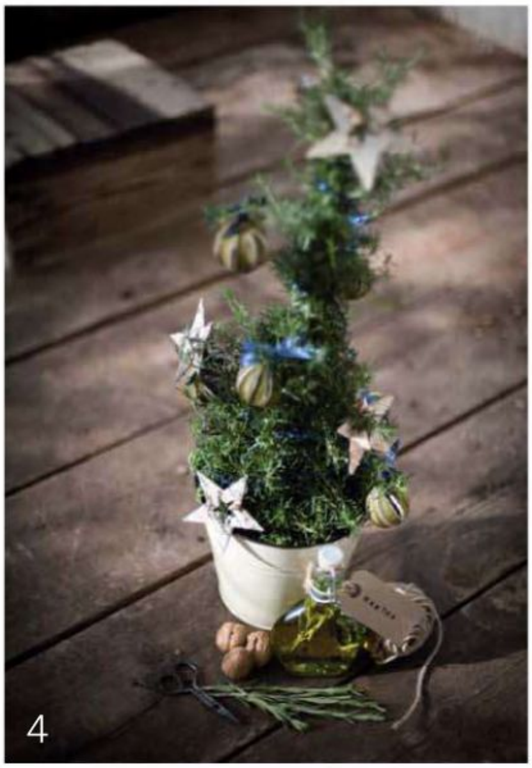
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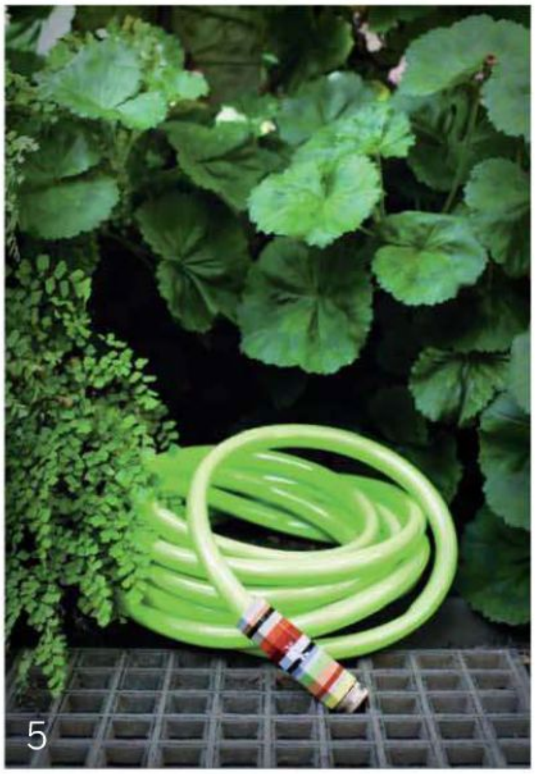
for the kitchen gardener

1 Love your legumes with this 100 per cent linen **cushion** with pea pod print (36cm x 36cm including cushion pad) by Trisha Needham, £34, and 'Parsley Pea' **card**, part of a set of four in two designs by from The Botanical Concept, £6, both available from Not On The High Street; address book stylist's own. **2** Great for cooking up a feast at the allotment, the **'Wildman' gift set** includes a storm kettle, fold-away bucket, fire striker, maya dust kindling, toasting fork and wild food book. £115 from The Worm That Turned. Keep the birds away from your brassicas and soft fruits with the **'Birds Away' kit** – a tin with pieces of shiny metal shaped like trowels and forks to hang from the included string, £11.99 from Cancer Research UK. **3** Set of four hand-painted wooden vegetable **labels**, featuring spinach, courgette, radish and leek, £9.95 from Garden Boutique. **4** The perfect Christmas tree for a foodie, this pyramid **rosemary bush** comes in a cream enamel bucket and is dressed with beautiful natural birch-bark star decorations and dried limes tied with ribbon. £27 from Plants4Presents. And why not make bottles of rosemary-flavoured oil to give as a gift? These dinky glass **preserve bottles** with handles and metal clip top lids cost £3.50 each from Willow & Stone. **For details of all stockists see page 100.**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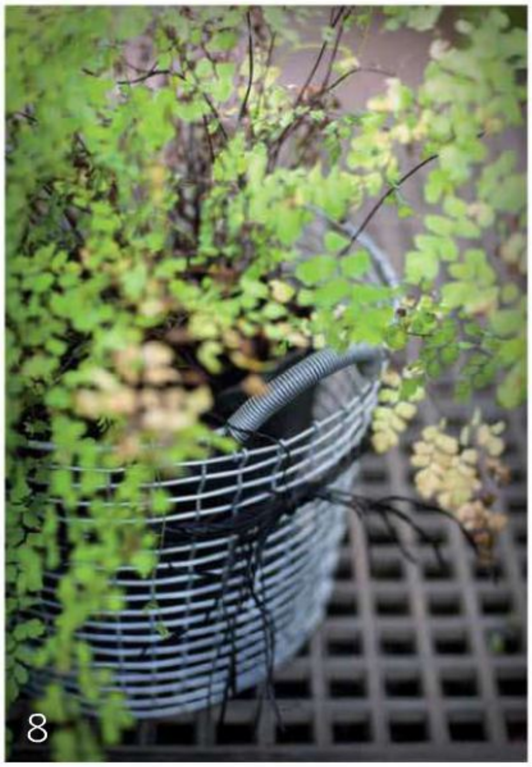
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for the modern gardener

5 Make a statement with this brightly coloured garden **hose** and striped nozzle, £29.95 from The Balcony Gardener. **6** Lime green metal **toolbox** with space for hand tools and a removable upper tray, £39.95 from the Balcony Gardener; 'Radius' lightweight and ergonomic range of **hand tools**, designed to cause less stress on the wrists when gardening, made from hard-wearing aluminium with grip handles, £31.95 for a set of four including trowel, transplanter, weeder and cultivator from GardenSkill; Pack of 10 **cane toppers,** £3.99 from Haxnicks, available in black, pink or turquoise. **7** Feel closer to nature with these Vibram 'Five Fingers Classic' **shoes**. Designed to fit snugly, the slip-on style enables you to feel more like you're barefoot, but protects your soles. £76 from Love Those Shoes. For those with minimal space, these ingenious silicone 'Pack-Away' **buckets** are a must, collapsing from 20cm in height to less than 5cm for storage. Available in a range of colours, £19.95 from Wacky Practicals. **8** Versatile and with modern good looks, the Korbo 'Classic 24' woven **wire planter** has integral handles making it perfect to double as a trug for carrying items around the garden, £50 from The Balcony Gardener. **For details of all stockists see page 100.**

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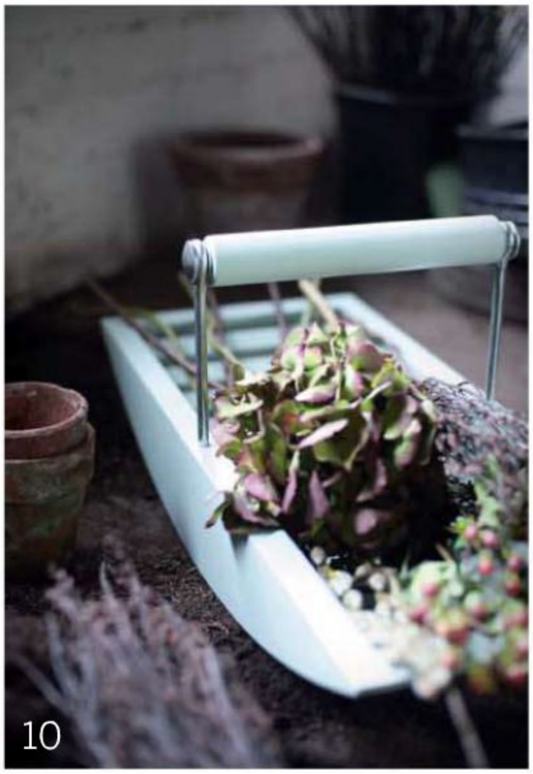

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12

for the traditional gardener

9 Stunning **botanical charts** designed in the 1950s and 60s, reprinted on canvas with wooden rods and cord for hanging. Six designs to choose from ('Sundew' shown), £48 each from Whippet Grey. **10** Stylish hand-crafted wooden **trug** with slatted base, finished in subtle 'Blue Green' Farrow & Ball exterior eggshell (other colours available), £95 from Geoffrey Fisher Design. **11** This small wooden **tape measure** feels great in your hand, fits neatly in your bag or pocket, and makes a great stocking filler, £9.50 from Rockett St George; every gardener needs a good knife, and this ladies' **pruning knife** with folding stainless steel blade will make light work of grafting and taking cuttings, £26 from Hen & Hammock. **12** Leslie Oschmann makes these charming **bags** from vintage oil paintings sourced at markets in the Netherlands and Belgium. Each is unique and features leather handles and an interior pocket. €275 from Swarm; traditional tools for a traditional gardener – this vintage **fork and spade** are beautifully made and have a lovely patina. They come as a set for £50, presented in a hessian gift bag; vintage 14-inch **riddle** with wooden frame and ¼-inch galvanised metal mesh, £30, all from Garden and Wood. **For details of all stockists see page 100.**☐

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Brassicas

For the finest Brussels sprouts next Christmas (and delicious brassicas all winter), follow Alys's essential growing guide – the last in this series

WORDS **ALYS FOWLER** ILLUSTRATIONS **KERRY LEMON**

The brassica family is huge and varied, but all its relatives are a hungry lot. The fast-growing ones – oriental greens, radishes and rocket – can fair better in poor soil, as long as it is free-draining. This month, though, we are focusing on brassicas that need a long growth period before harvest, which include cauliflowers, cabbages, Brussels sprouts, swede and sprouting broccoli, and these all need good soil to do well, and lots of food.

Preparing your soil

Brassicas won't thrive in acidic soil; a happy plant needs soil with a pH of around seven. It also prefers soil rich in humus, as well as a constant supply of water and plenty of sun.

Clay soil tends to be acidic, so if you garden on clay and want a successful crop of brassicas, you'll need to start adding compost by the barrow load. Sandy soil is actually a good starting point, but again the plants will need a lot of organic matter.

> “ you don't have to dig the compost in because the worms will do the job for you during the winter ”

Whether you have clay or sandy soil, ideally you should add two barrow loads of manure or homemade compost per square metre of soil in the autumn. It's a good idea to dig the ground first, but you don't actually have to dig the compost in because the worms will do the job for you during the winter, gradually drawing the nutrients into the ground. Come spring, you can add lime to the soil, which will neutralise any acidity in it. Leave the lime to sweeten for a couple of weeks and you're ready to start planting. Never add lime and compost together as this has a negative impact on both.

It should be said that this is the *ideal* method. Many a time I've grown brassicas on much less well-prepared soil. Growing them on hungry soils is a struggle, though. You'll have to keep feeding them a lot more.

How to plant

Sowing times for long-term brassicas vary according to the crop (see *What to Plant*, overleaf, for sowing times). They are best raised in modules and potted-on before planting out. The plant should be about 10cm high, with healthy roots. This is especially important if there is a risk of club root (see *Problems & solutions*, below). Rotating the long-growing brassicas around your patch will help your crops avoid club root. A four-year rotation is good, six to eight better.

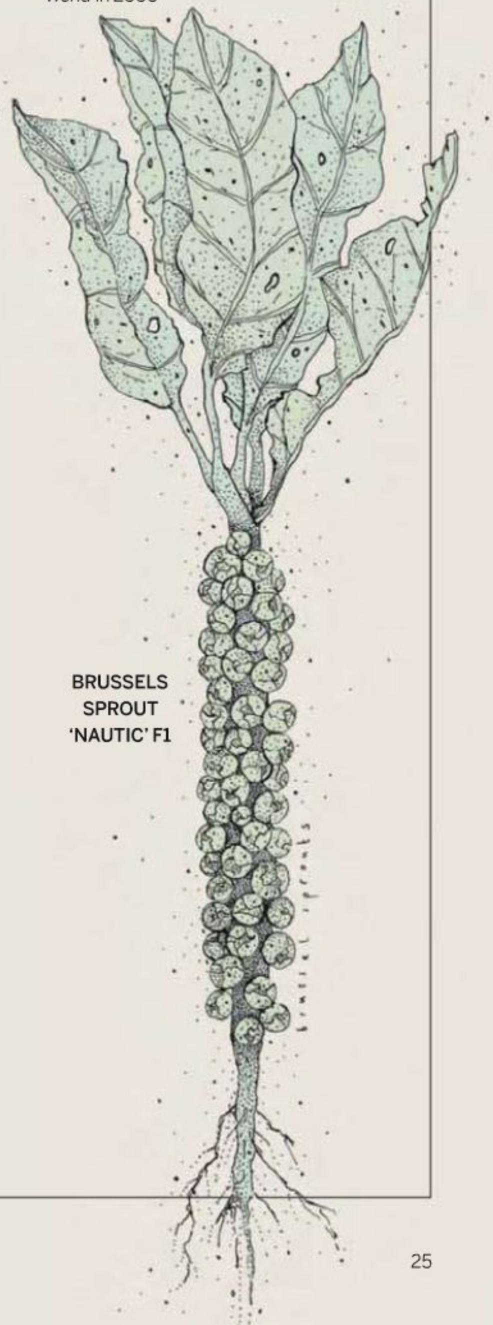
When to feed them

A mid-season feed is essential for long-term brassicas. The minute there is any top growth, I earth-up with homemade compost or organic multipurpose compost. This provides a new source of potassium and phosphorus. A liquid feed will provide an extra source of nitrogen. Earthing-up also firms-in the plant, reducing the chances of stem rock, which damages the fine hairs on the roots.

Problems & solutions

Club root is a soil-borne disease that kills brassicas. It often causes wilting and stunts growth, as if the plant's base has arthritis. The roots are thick and swollen, like fat fingers. It can persist in the soil for up to eight years and is easily transported around a site on feet and tools. Good hygiene is important, as well as a long rotation and lots of compost – the more the merrier, as green waste seems to suppress the disease. Club root is particularly bad on wet, acid soils. ▷

Alys Fowler studied horticulture at Wisley and Kew before joining *Gardeners' World* in 2006



BRUSSELS SPROUT 'NAUTIC' F1

▷ **Bolting** is often caused by environmental stress. On spring days when the temperature is particularly warm, then the night cold, the plant will assume it's late summer and go to seed. There is not much you can do about it, but extra watering can help.

'Blindness' is when the plants never 'head up': they don't develop a centre, usually because the plant was stressed by nutrient deficiency, waterlogged soil, dryness, disease or pest damage. You need to add more compost to the soil next year.

The juvenile form of **cabbage root fly** is a small maggot that eats the roots of brassicas. A 15cm-wide collar around the base of the plant will stop the flies laying their eggs. When cow parsley begins to bloom it's time to fit the collars – this coincides with the moment the cabbage root fly lays its eggs. You can buy these collars in shops or make them using carpet underlay or roofing felt.

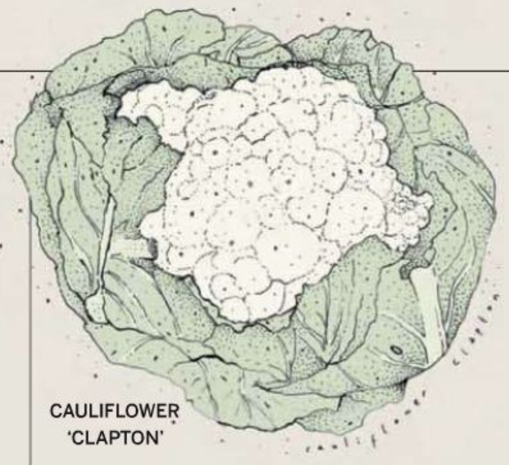
> “Good hygiene is important, as well as a long rotation and lots of compost”

Cabbage white butterflies are best picked off or squished. Enviromesh is good at keeping the butterflies at bay.

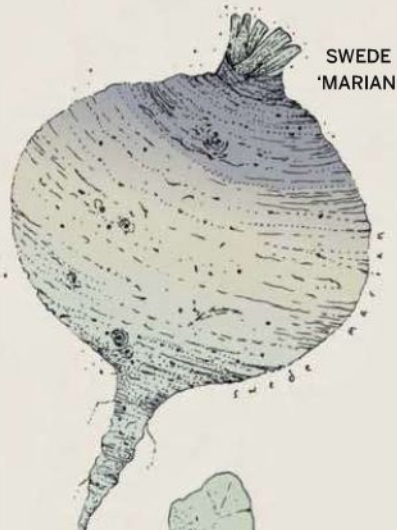
Pigeons love cabbages. They are not very good at finding them among other plants, but come winter, when everything else has died back and the pigeons are hungry, they can't miss them. Net with a strong frame and make sure pigeons can't sit on the frame and peck through the net.

Brassica downy mildew often manifests as yellow patches on the upper side of leaves and white fuzzy patches below. It is worse in wet conditions and affects seedlings and young plants. Take yellowing leaves off brassicas and destroy them (but don't put them on the compost). **Brassica white blister** (white blisters and pustules) also occurs in wet conditions; the remedy is the same. □

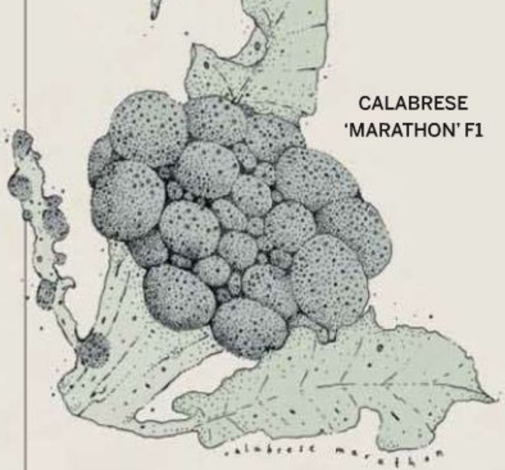
BBC Alys Fowler presents *Gardeners' World*, which returns to BBC2 in the new year.



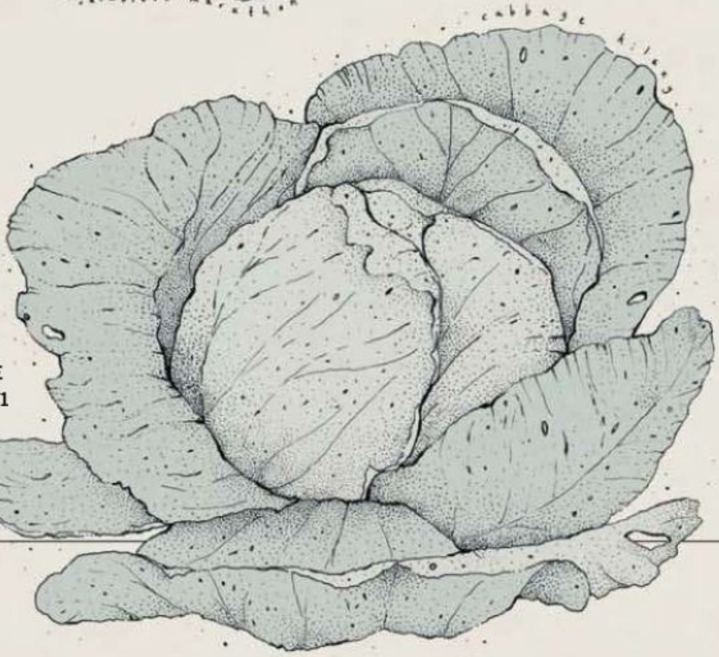
CAULIFLOWER 'CLAPTON'



SWEDE 'MARIAN'



CALABRESE 'MARATHON' F1



CABBAGE 'KILAXY' F1

What to plant

Alys Fowler chooses her favourite disease-resistant brassicas

Brussels sprout 'Nautic' F1
The best-performing cultivar in organic trials by the National Institute of Agricultural Botany in 2006-7. It has a good flavour and is resistant to powdery mildews.
SOW Feb to April. HARVEST Oct to Dec.

Cabbage 'Kilaxy' F1
Has good resistance with a dense head. It has tender inner leaves and stores particularly well.
SOW March to May. HARVEST Aug to Nov.

Calabrese 'Marathon' F1
This broccoli is slow to bolt and show signs of good resistance to disease.
SOW March to June. HARVEST Aug to Nov.

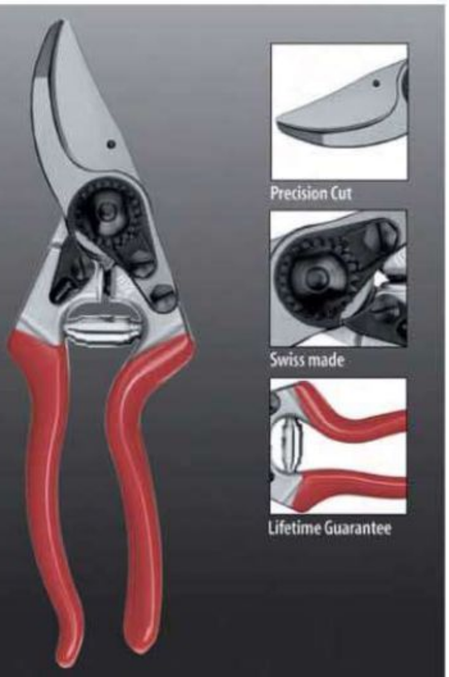
Calabrese 'Samson' F1
Very large heads of broccoli. Shows resistance to downy mildew.
SOW March to June. HARVEST Aug to Nov.

Cauliflower 'Clapton'
Shows a high degree of resistance to most club root strains. It's fairly upright, so you can squeeze a few more in to your row and it won't ripen all at once, which means gluts are less likely. It's early to crop.
SOW March to April. HARVEST July to October.

Swede 'Invitation'
This cultivar shows resistance to club root and powdery mildew. It has a high dry matter content, which improves winter hardiness and cooks well.
SOW March to June. HARVEST Oct to March.

Swede 'Marian'
Shows resistance to both club root and mildew. Its roots have a good flavour and a dense texture.
SOW March to June. HARVEST Nov to Jan.

Swede 'Ruby'
Creamy-coloured flesh with good flavour and shows resistance to mildew.
SOW March to June. HARVEST April to Oct.



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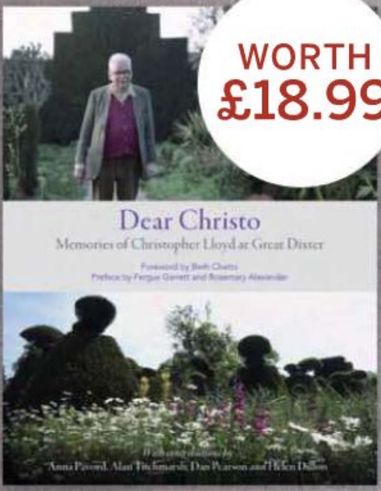

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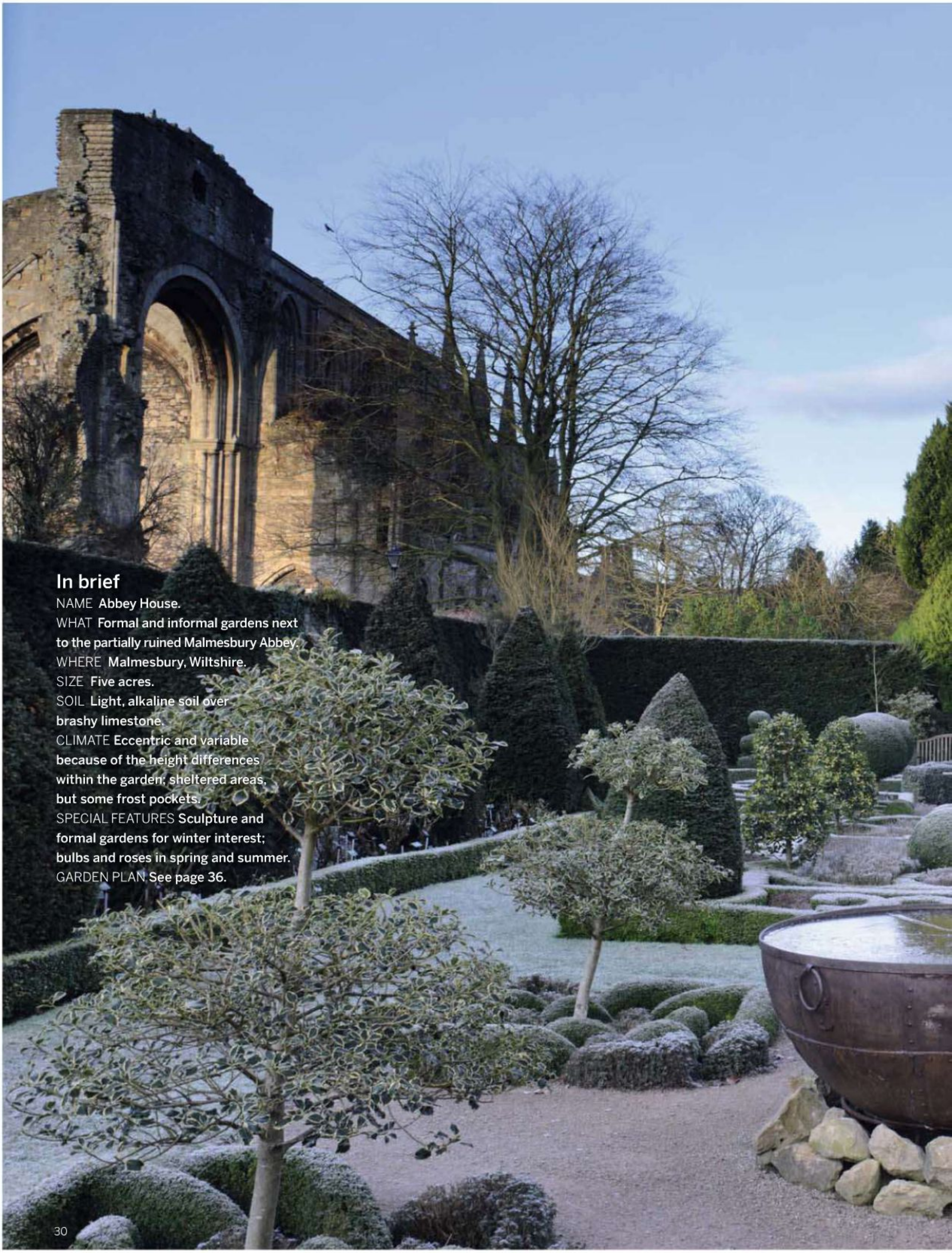


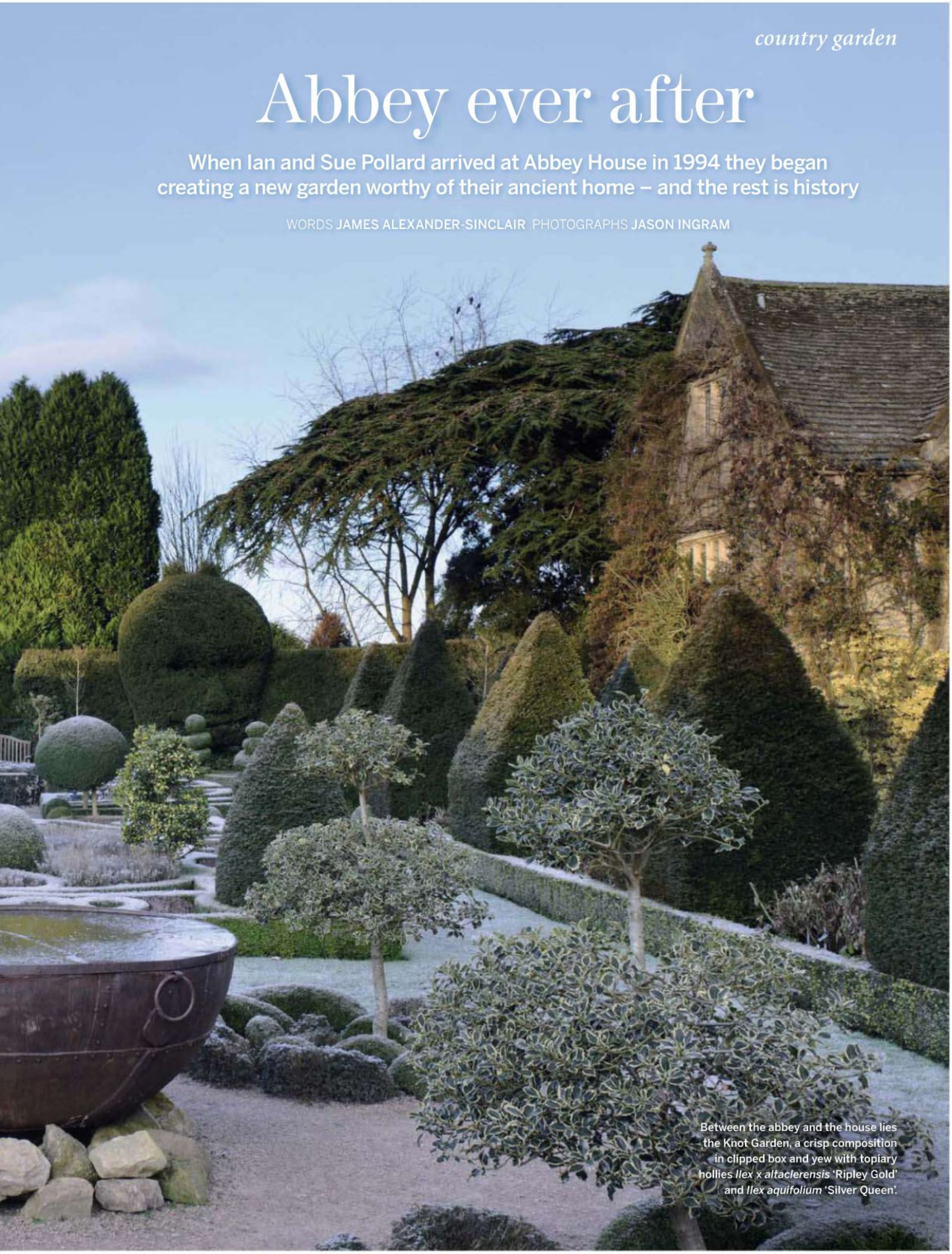
In brief

NAME **Abbey House.**
WHAT **Formal and informal gardens next to the partially ruined Malmesbury Abbey.**
WHERE **Malmesbury, Wiltshire.**
SIZE **Five acres.**
SOIL **Light, alkaline soil over brashy limestone.**
CLIMATE **Eccentric and variable because of the height differences within the garden; sheltered areas, but some frost pockets.**
SPECIAL FEATURES **Sculpture and formal gardens for winter interest; bulbs and roses in spring and summer.**
GARDEN PLAN **See page 36.**

Abbey ever after

When Ian and Sue Pollard arrived at Abbey House in 1994 they began creating a new garden worthy of their ancient home – and the rest is history

WORDS **JAMES ALEXANDER-SINCLAIR** PHOTOGRAPHS **JASON INGRAM**



Between the abbey and the house lies the Knot Garden, a crisp composition in clipped box and yew with topiary hollies *Ilex* x *altaclerensis* 'Ripley Gold' and *Ilex aquifolium* 'Silver Queen'.

The Knot Garden was created in the mid-1990s, yet perfectly matches the 16th-century house.

Sixteen years ago the quiet Wiltshire town of Malmesbury was struck by a whirlwind. In this case it came not in the conventional guise of high winds and driving rain but in the form of Ian and Barbara Pollard. She with striking magenta hair and he with wizard's beard, and neither of them happier than when gardening naked. You can understand that the gentle folk of the town and the quiet grounds of Abbey Gardens were just a little taken aback.

Malmesbury Abbey sits proudly on top of a hill looking across the rolling countryside of Wiltshire. Although the grounds here have been cultivated for the past thousand years, mostly by generations of monks, the development of the site as a pleasure garden is relatively new, and almost exclusively due to the vision and efforts of Ian and Barbara.

Ian began as a property developer (among others, he built the Marco Polo building opposite Battersea Park in South London) before moving to his first major garden in Nottinghamshire. From there he and Barbara moved to 180 acres at Hazelbury Manor in Wiltshire before "downsizing" to Abbey Gardens. "When we got here," says Ian, "the garden consisted of four clapped out rose beds, an orchard and an enormous tulip tree that was leaning at a gravity-defying angle."

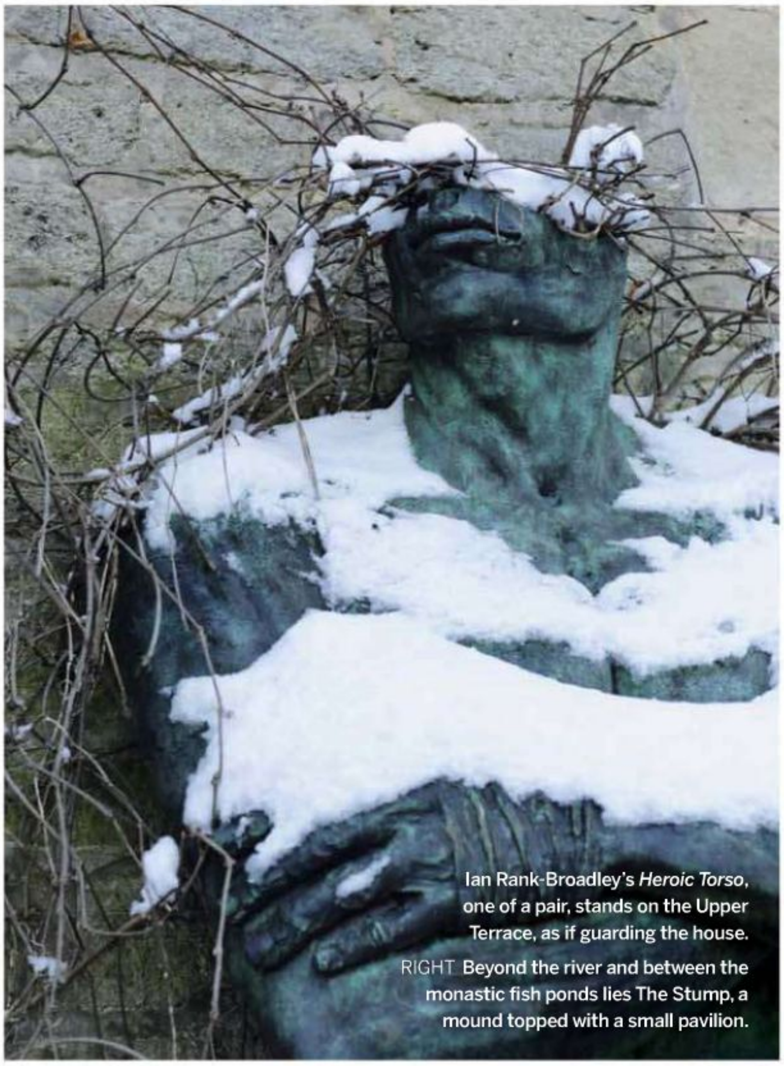
Things have changed since then. The showpiece garden by the front of the house is the formal garden. This consists of a series of box-edged borders forming a Celtic cross, which is intended to pay homage not only to the monks but also to the Celts who predate them. An enormous representation of the Green Man (of Pagan legend) is sculpted from the yew hedge that encircles the garden. The structure is immensely muscular and shows through whatever the season. "There was nothing on paper," says Barbara. "Ian marked it all out with hose pipes and whatever else happened to be lying around."

Ancient and modern combine

From the formal garden you wander on to the upper lawn. This is the home, among other things, of a stone sarcophagus dug up when they were planting roses. A series of excellent sculptures includes a fabulous tower of metal discs cascading water (pictured far right). A bit further on, magnificent double borders lead through the old orchard and on to a cloistered herb garden, containing a spectacular 2,000 herbs in raised oak beds.

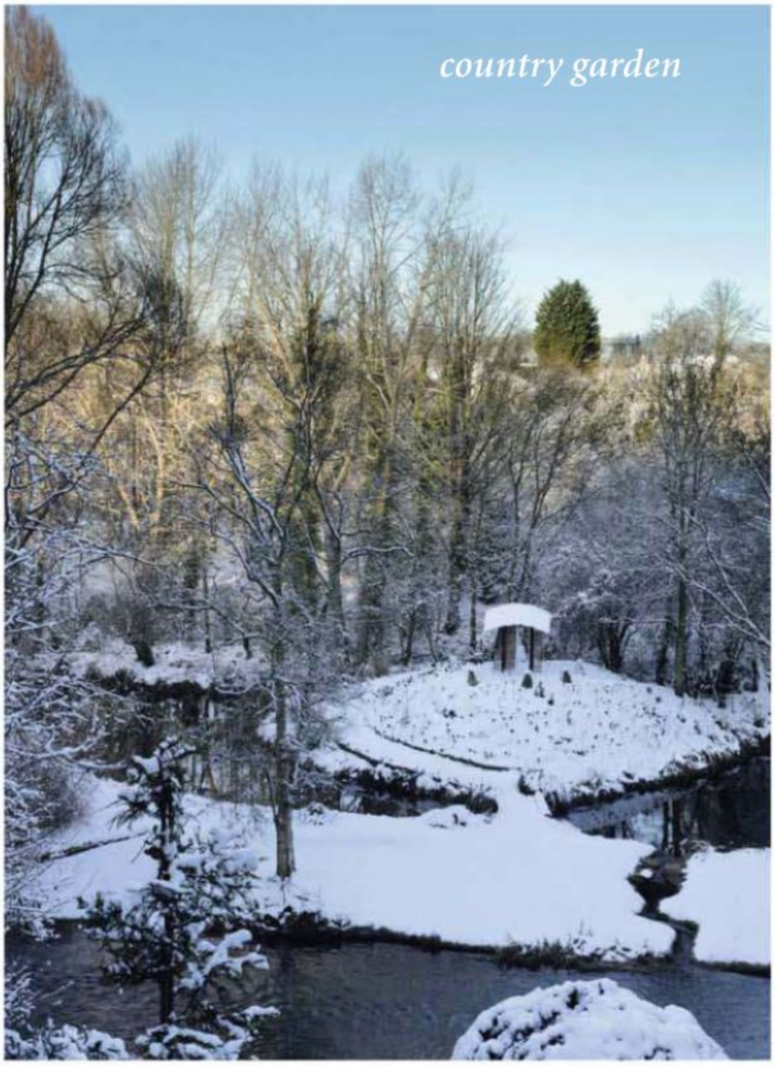
Although there is an ancient feel to these gardens, they are not supposed to be a replica. "We use some Tudor plants," says Ian, "but we never intended to create a period garden." This is apparent as the planting throughout these parts of the garden is dominated (though not exclusively) by tulips followed by roses. There are 150,000 tulips growing in the gardens, with 20,000 added every year. "It is an exercise in pointillism," according to Barbara. "Ian likes *new*, I like what *works*." These are followed by 2,000 roses planted in almost every available bed; the Pollards don't do things by halves. They are placed according to height rather than colour, so livid pinks sidle up to oranges, whites and crimsons.

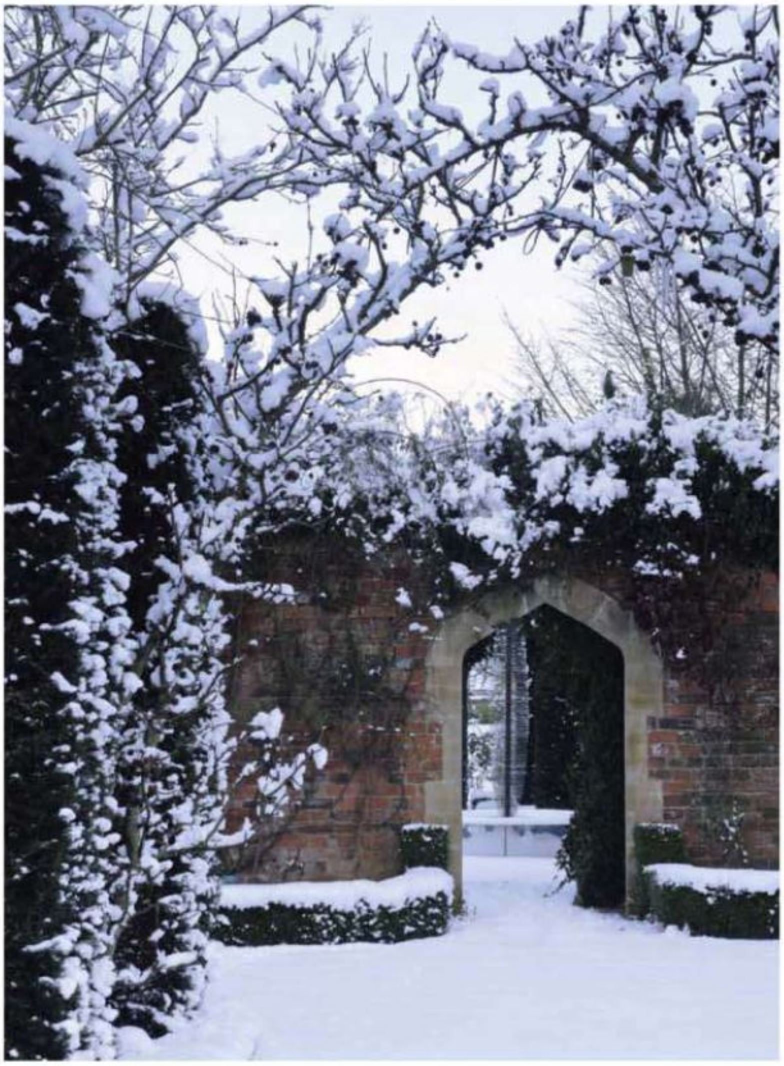
Round the corner from here, everything changes. Ian had always wanted to garden a slope leading down to water, and here his wish was granted. The garden suddenly plummets 50-odd feet down to the River Avon and the garden transforms into a woodland garden accessed by a series of paths with hairpin bends. Here there are old and young trees, shrubs and some fabulous understorey plants (in particular some great epimediums). All this was made by Ian skidding around in a digger (at one point ▷

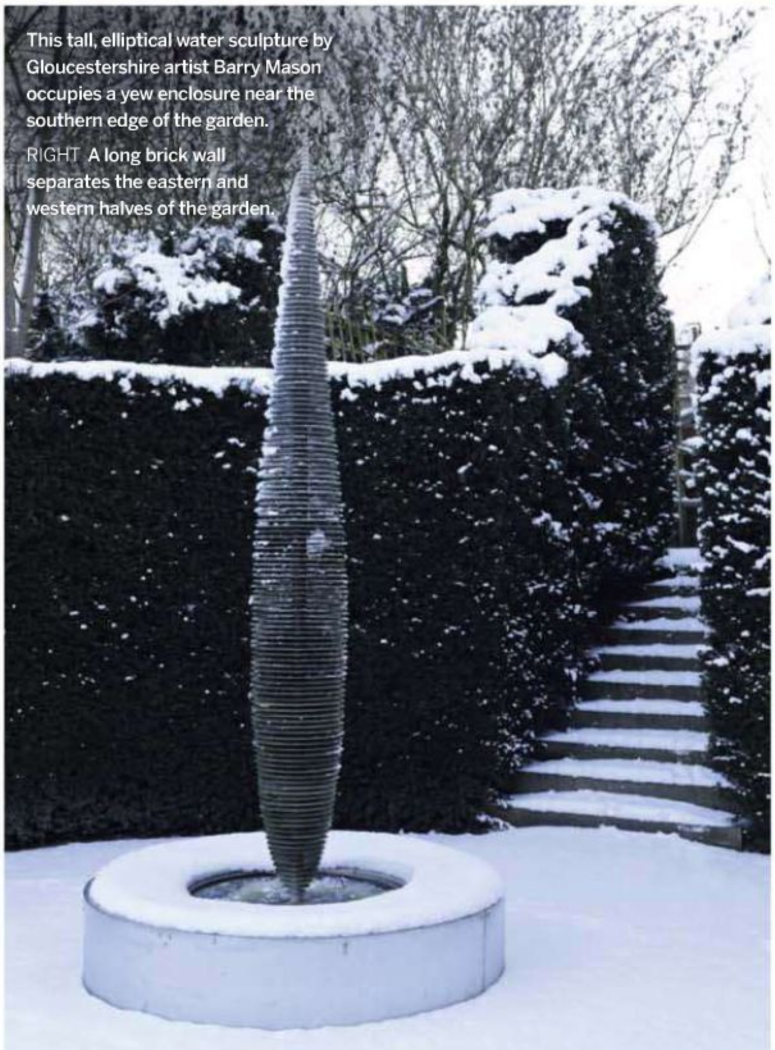


Ian Rank-Broadley's *Heroic Torso*, one of a pair, stands on the Upper Terrace, as if guarding the house.

RIGHT Beyond the river and between the monastic fish ponds lies The Stump, a mound topped with a small pavilion.







This tall, elliptical water sculpture by Gloucestershire artist Barry Mason occupies a yew enclosure near the southern edge of the garden.

RIGHT A long brick wall separates the eastern and western halves of the garden.

Winter care

Four ways to stop Jack Frost giving your garden a nasty nip

FLORA PRESS / GAP PHOTOS

1 Cosy conifers

Heaped evergreen branches keep the worst frost off delicate shoots.

WERNER DIETERICH / PHOTOLIBRARY

2 Wrap pots

Little duvets of hessian or fleece will protect pots from severe cold.

MATT ANKER / GAP PHOTOS

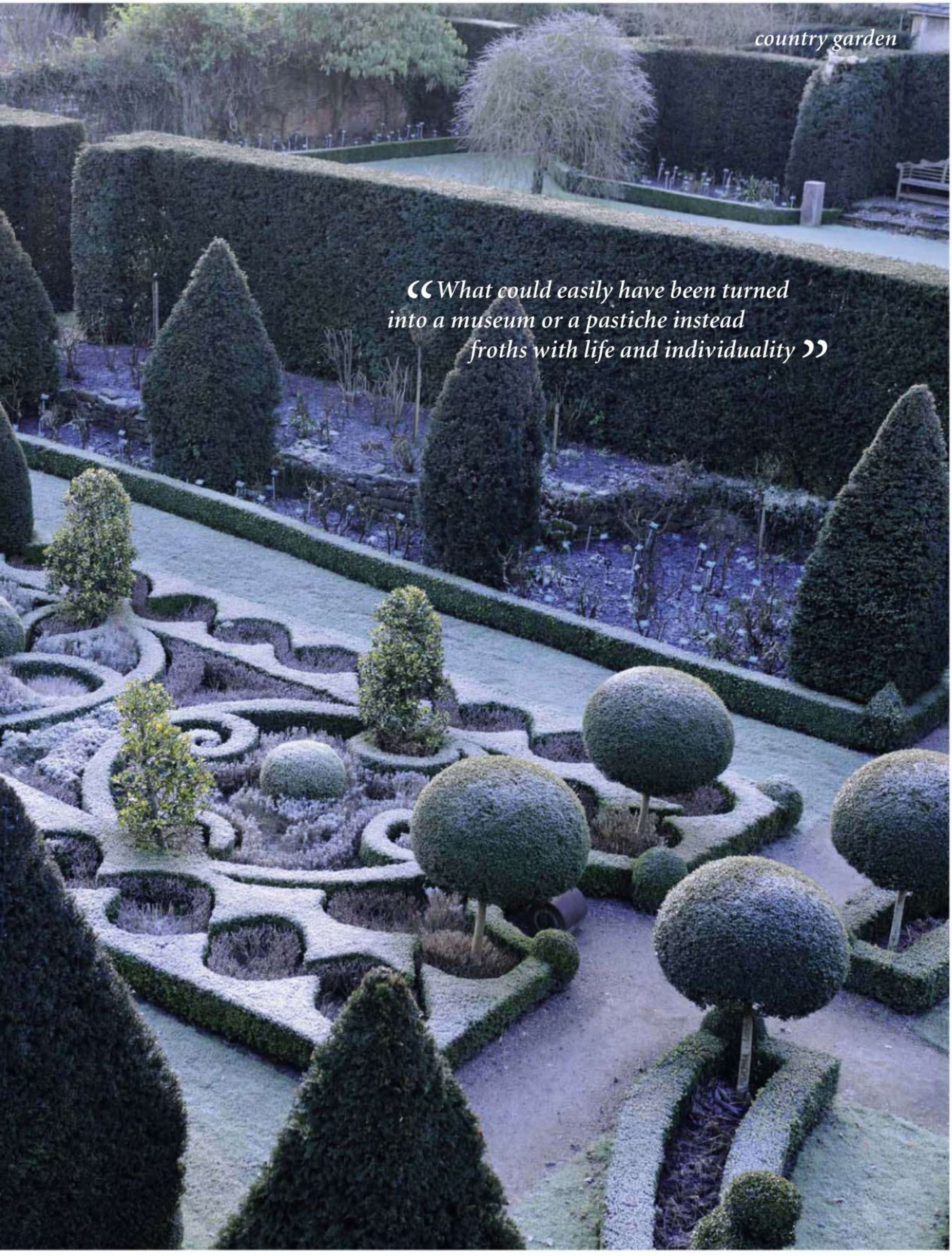
3 Protect tender plants

A bundle of bracken in a willow bell cloche will keep plants snug.

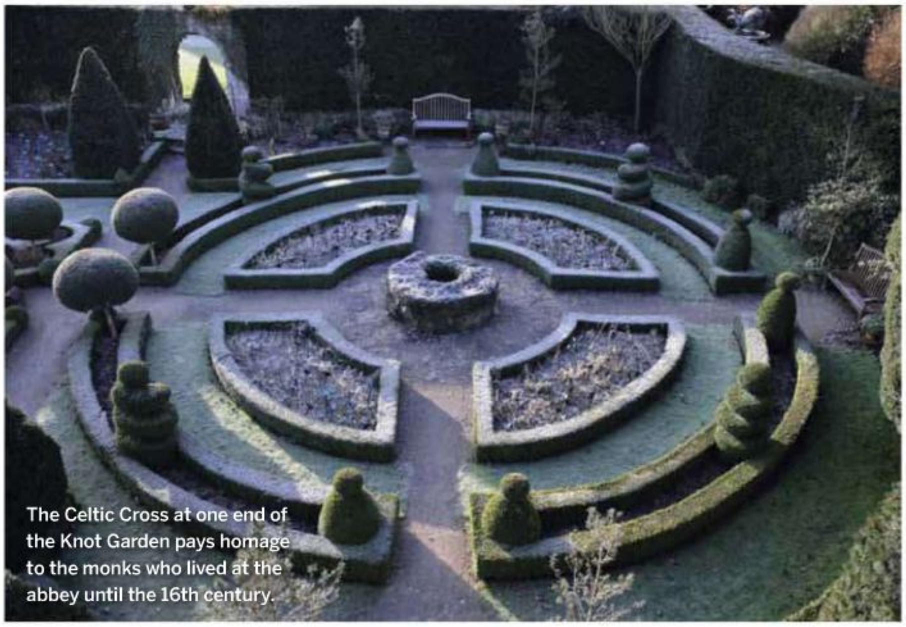
4 Glass cloche

The decorative way to protect young or tender plants in winter.

The Knot Garden looks spectacular from the upstairs rooms of Abbey House and includes some of the extensive rose collection.



> “What could easily have been turned into a museum or a pastiche instead froths with life and individuality”



The Celtic Cross at one end of the Knot Garden pays homage to the monks who lived at the abbey until the 16th century.

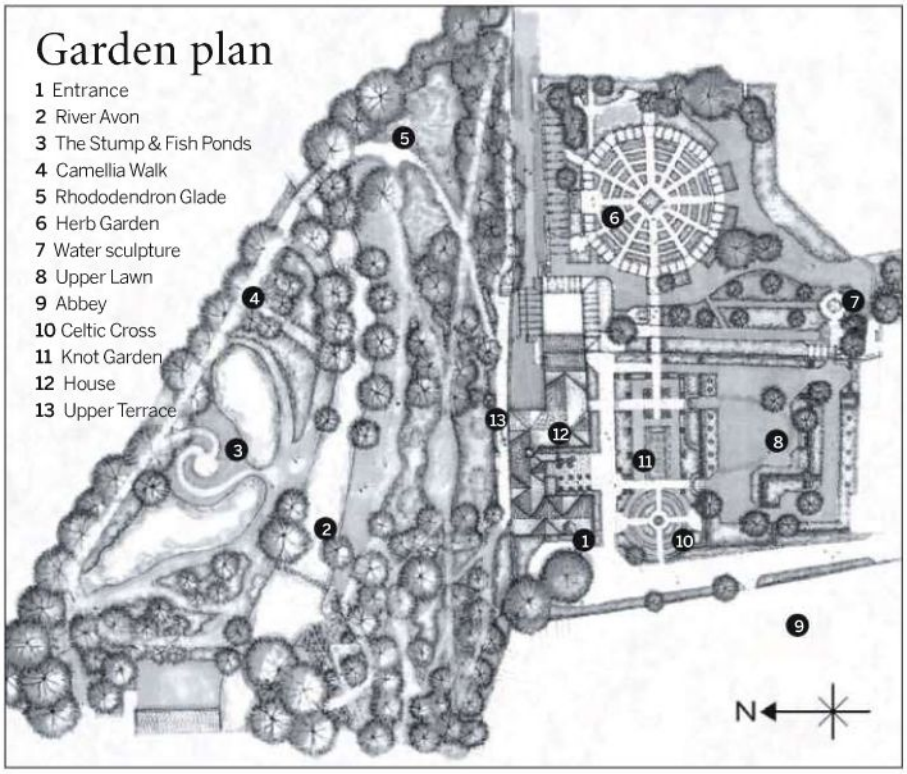
▷ narrowly avoiding tipping both himself and machine down the hill into the river). It is an impressive project with a gloriously studded and chained bridge, banks of camellias and a towering stone waterfall.

The Pollards have managed something remarkable at Abbey House. The gardens augment and complement not only the majestic walls of the abbey and the mystic memory of the monks but also the Pollards' own eccentric and, if I may be so bold, slightly hippyish principles. What could easily have been turned into a museum or a pastiche instead froths with life and individuality. The randomness of some of the planting may upset purists, but I doubt Ian loses much sleep over that: I suspect this garden has much more to do with passion than purity.□

USEFUL INFORMATION

ADDRESS The Abbey House, Malmesbury, Wiltshire SN16 9AS. TEL 01666 822212. WEBSITE www.abbeyhousegardens.co.uk OPEN 21 March to 31 October, 2011, 11am to 5.30pm. ENTRANCE £6.50. EVENTS Clothes Optional Days for 2011 are 22 May, 5 June, 10 July, 7 Aug and 4 Sept.

BBC James Alexander-Sinclair is a garden designer who appears regularly on BBC gardening programmes.



JULIETTE POLLARD

9 ideas for your winter garden

James Alexander-Sinclair on how to make your garden look great in the cold months

1 Berries
One of the cheeriest things in the winter garden, providing little spots of colour. These berries belong to a sea buckthorn (*Hippophae rhamnoides*).

2 Topiary
Like sculpture but cheaper and easier to manipulate. Well-cut shapes in box or other evergreens add focal points and drama.

3 Sculpture
Some sculptures are best nestled in among the foliage and others come into their own when standing in the open. Choose wisely. This one, by the river, is *Fish-a-man* by Errol Tompkins.

4 Winter-flowering bulbs
There is always *something* flowering. Among the first to appear are snowdrops and blimey, are they welcome. This is *Galanthus nivalis* 'Lady Elphinstone'.

5 Ornaments
Along the same lines as sculptures (but not as highfalutin), a well-placed barrow or pot adds a little extra. This is a *kadai*, or ceremonial cooking pot, from India.

6 Clipped hedges
Hedges are the spines and ribcages of the garden. Strong lines are always effective.

7 Decorative stems
The brightest colour in a winter garden often come from stems such as willows, *Rubus* and dogwood (including this *Cornus alba* 'Sibirica', pictured with alder cones from an overhanging tree).

8 Evergreen plants
Of course, evergreens such as *Ilex x altaclerensis* 'Lawsoniana' help, but not *too* many of them. An evergreen garden can be dull in summer, and a bit of emptiness is good in winter.

9 Trees for winter interest
On deciduous trees all we are left with by now is the skeletons and the bark – but this is a good thing if you have paperbark maples (*Acer griseum*, pictured).

1

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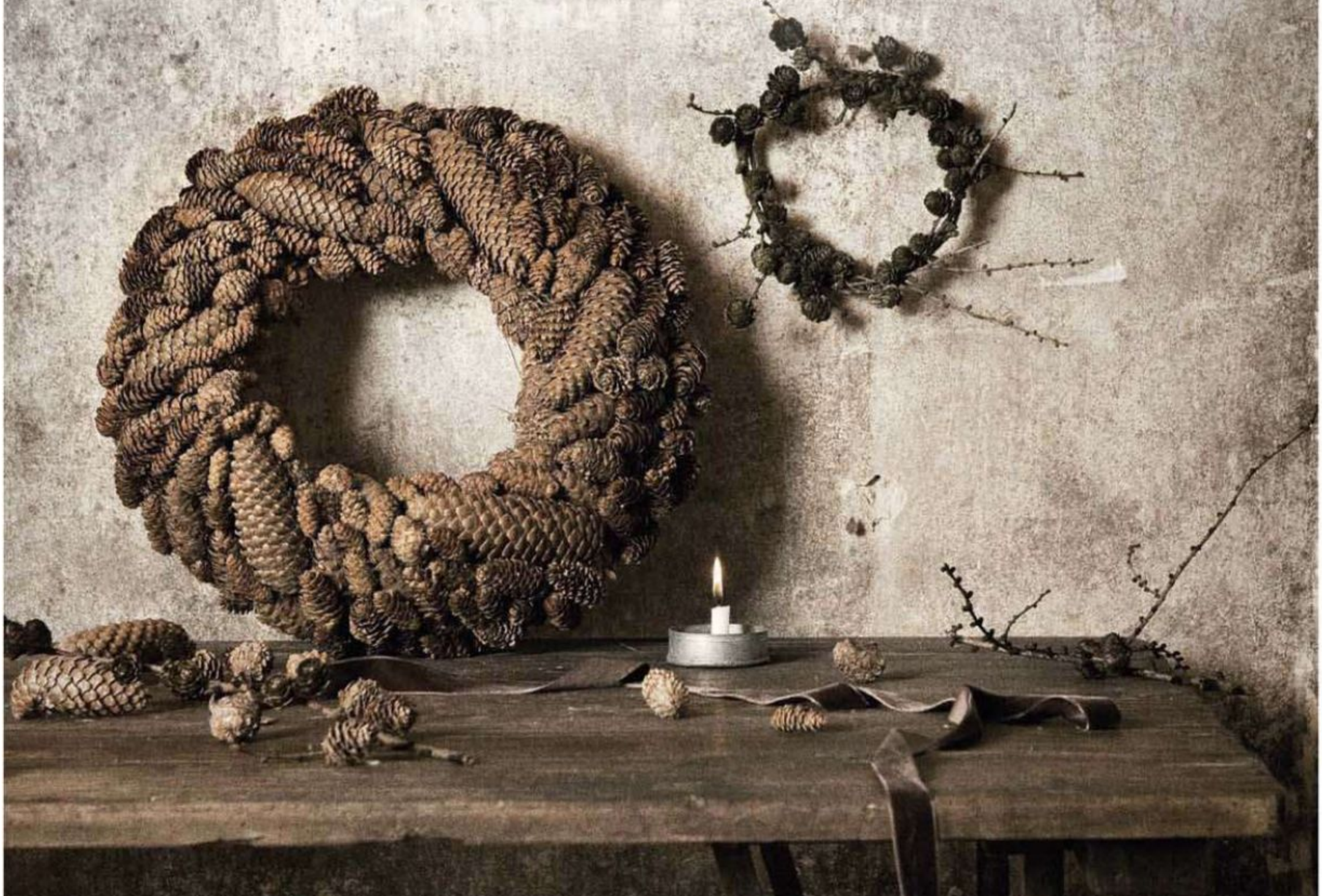
A real Christmas

Leave your tinsel in the loft this Christmas and go for natural, home-made decorations using plants that grow in gardens, parks and woods

WORDS **ANNEMARIE JAKOBSEN & INGER SKAARUP** PHOTOGRAPHS **HEIDI LERKENFELDT**



Cone wreath

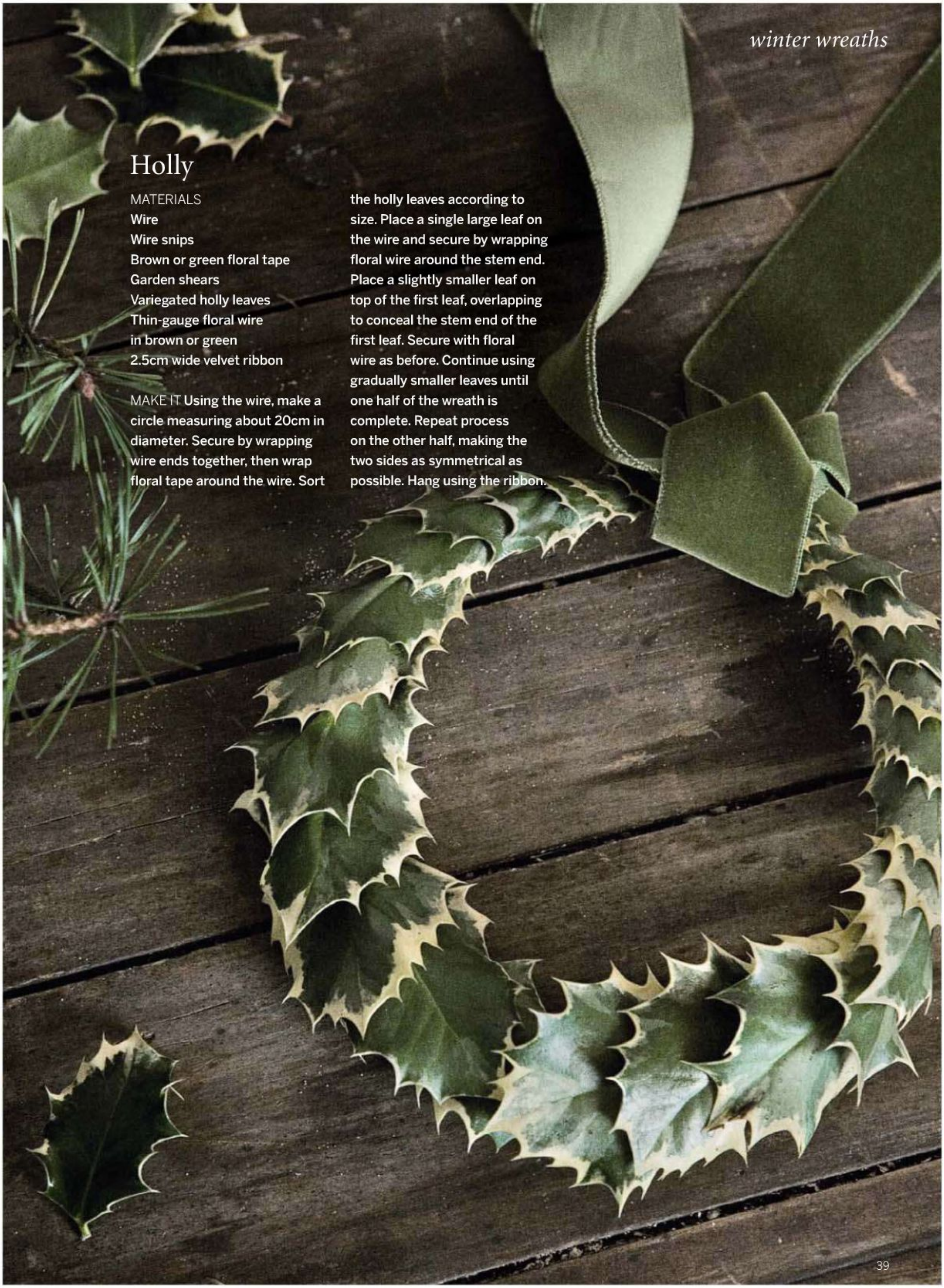
MATERIALS
Straw wreath base, 30-35cm in diameter
Moss
Green thin-gauge floral wire
Wire snips
Cones in various sizes – larch or pine
Glue gun

MAKE IT Place a piece of moss on the straw wreath base and secure by wrapping tightly with floral wire. Repeat until the entire wreath base is covered, trimming moss pieces to fit if necessary. Glue on the pine cones, starting with the largest. Continue with the medium-sized cones and finish by using the smallest to fill in gaps.

Larch boughs with cones

MATERIALS
Wire
Wire snips
Thin branches of European larch, with cones
Garden shears
Thin-gauge floral wire in brown or green
Optional glue gun, ribbon

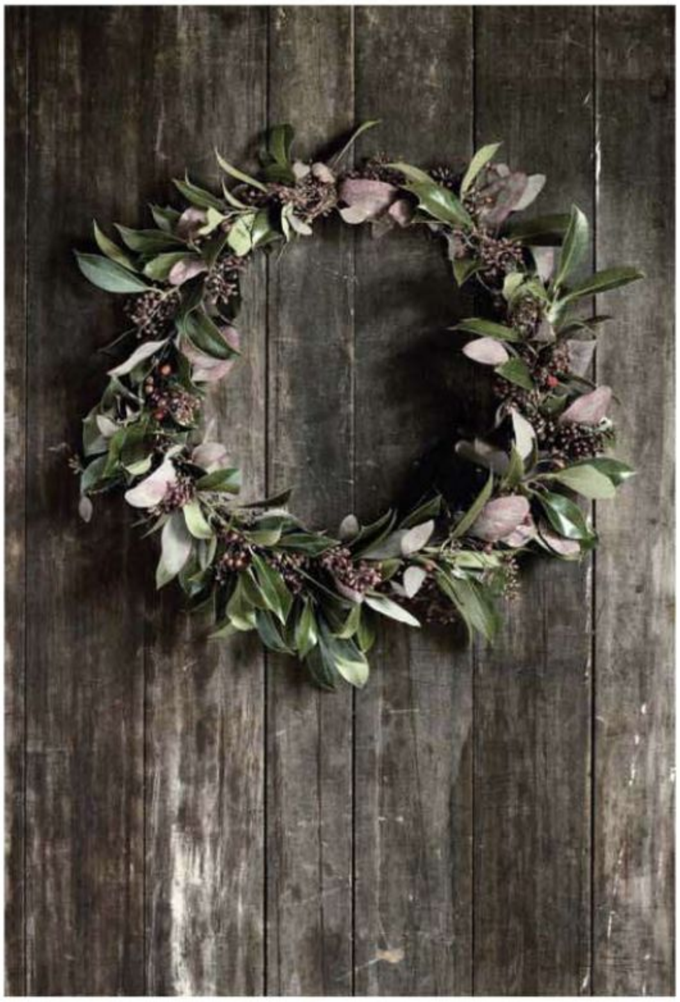
MAKE IT Using a piece of wire, make a circle about 15cm in diameter. Secure by wrapping wire ends together. Cut the larch into small pieces. Place a piece on the wire circle and secure by wrapping tightly with floral wire. Continue until the wire circle is covered, allowing some of the side branches to stick out in various directions. Glue on additional cones if you like, and hang from a wire loop or ribbon.

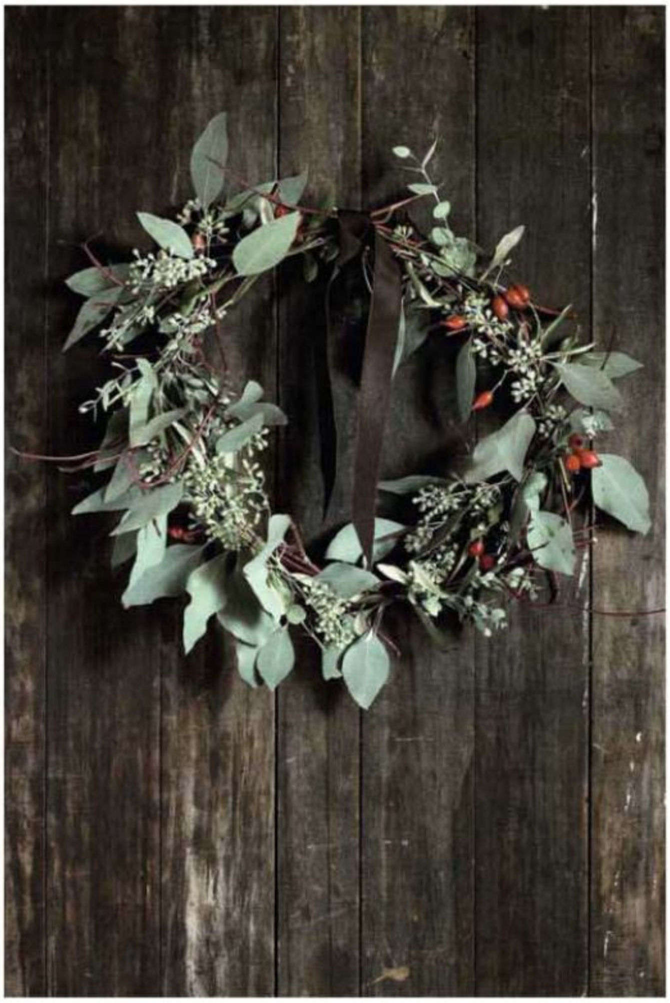


Holly

MATERIALS
Wire
Wire snips
Brown or green floral tape
Garden shears
Variegated holly leaves
Thin-gauge floral wire
in brown or green
2.5cm wide velvet ribbon

MAKE IT Using the wire, make a circle measuring about 20cm in diameter. Secure by wrapping wire ends together, then wrap floral tape around the wire. Sort the holly leaves according to size. Place a single large leaf on the wire and secure by wrapping floral wire around the stem end. Place a slightly smaller leaf on top of the first leaf, overlapping to conceal the stem end of the first leaf. Secure with floral wire as before. Continue using gradually smaller leaves until one half of the wreath is complete. Repeat process on the other half, making the two sides as symmetrical as possible. Hang using the ribbon.





Holly & eucalyptus

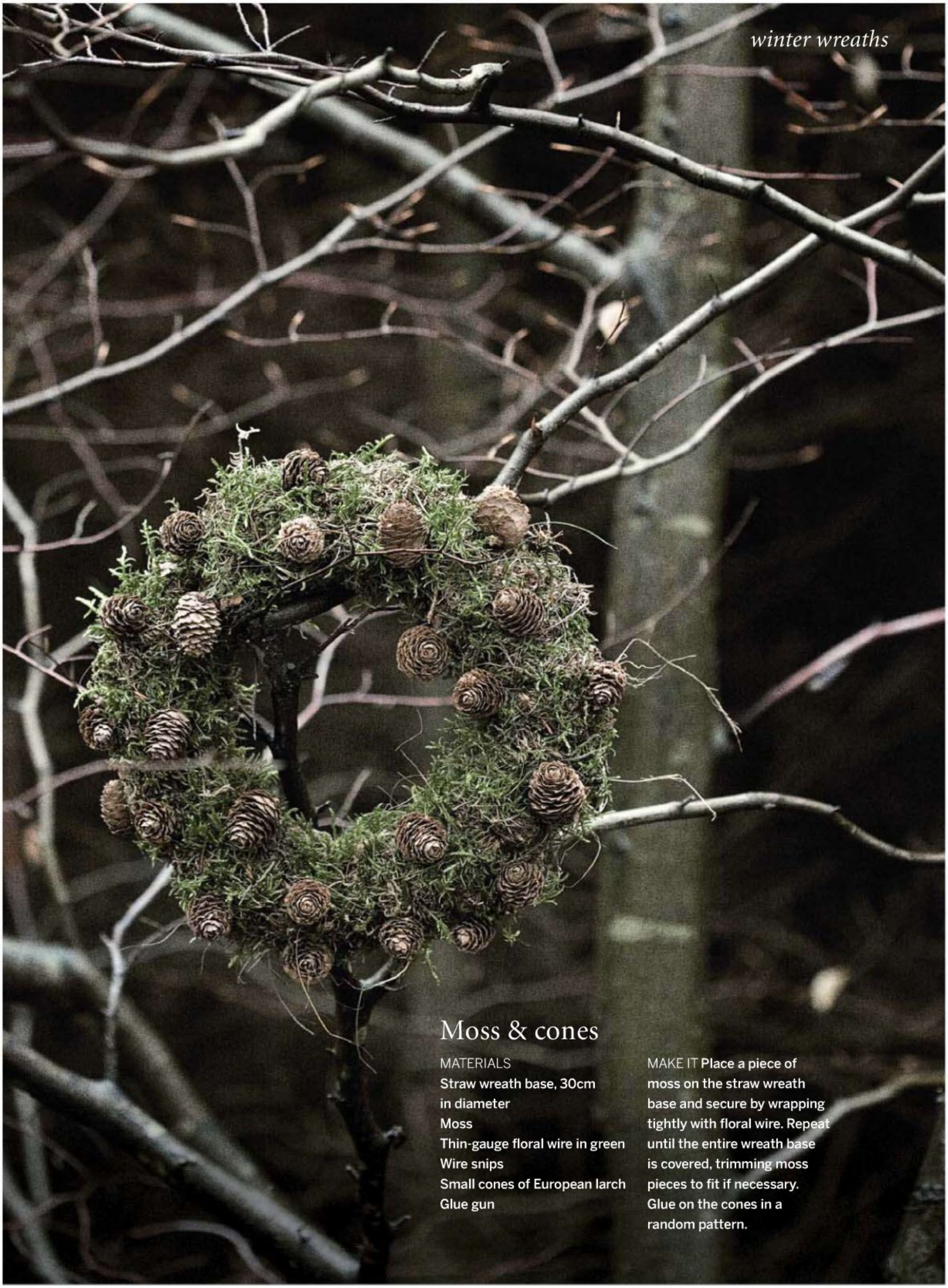
MATERIALS
Wire
Wire snips
Moss
Thin-gauge floral wire in green
Holly branches, with and without berries
Stems of eucalyptus with red leaves and berries
Garden shears

MAKE IT Using a piece of wire, make a circle about 20cm in diameter. Secure by wrapping wire ends together. Place a small piece of moss on the wire wreath base and wrap tightly with floral wire. Repeat until wire is covered, tearing large pieces of moss into smaller sections if necessary. Cut the holly and eucalyptus into smaller pieces. Using two or three pieces, make small bouquets, securing stem ends by wrapping with floral wire. Place a bouquet on the wire wreath base and secure by wrapping with floral wire. Add another bouquet, placing it so the top overlaps and conceals the stem ends of the first bouquet. Secure as before. Repeat around the wreath. Add a wire loop for hanging.

Blood twig dogwood & eucalyptus

MATERIALS
Stems of blood twig dogwood (*Cornus sanguinea*) or other red-stemmed dogwoods
Thin-gauge floral wire in green or brown
Stems of eucalyptus with grey-green berries
Rose brambles with hips
Garden shears
1-1.5cm wide velvet ribbon

MAKE IT Shape the dogwood stems into a circle, allowing some of the side branches to stick out in various directions. Secure in several places with small pieces of floral wire. Cut the eucalyptus and rose brambles into smaller pieces. Using two or three pieces make small bouquets, securing stem ends by wrapping with floral wire. Place a bouquet on the dogwood wreath base and secure by wrapping with floral wire. Add another bouquet, placing it so the top overlaps and conceals the stem ends of the first bouquet. Secure with floral wire. Repeat around the wreath. Finish by adding a wire loop for hanging and tie on a ribbon.



Moss & cones

MATERIALS
Straw wreath base, 30cm in diameter
Moss
Thin-gauge floral wire in green
Wire snips
Small cones of European larch
Glue gun

MAKE IT **Place a piece of moss on the straw wreath base and secure by wrapping tightly with floral wire. Repeat until the entire wreath base is covered, trimming moss pieces to fit if necessary. Glue on the cones in a random pattern.**

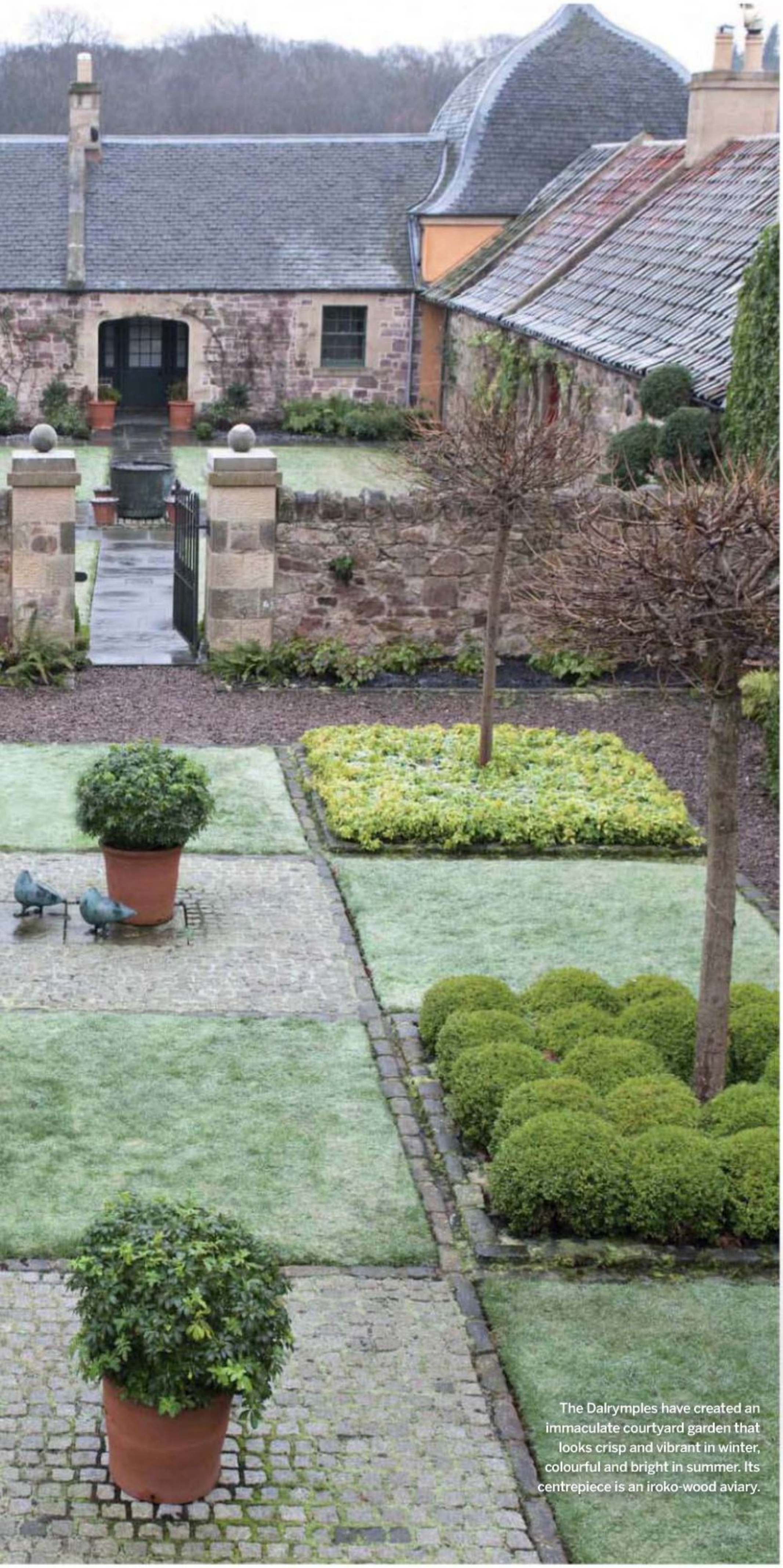
The all-weather garden

Robert and Anna's garden in East Lothian looks fantastic in spring, summer and winter – not bad for a couple who admit they don't like gardening

WORDS **NOËL KINGSBURY** PHOTOGRAPHS **ANDREA JONES**

IN BRIEF

WHAT **Broadwoodside, converted farm buildings surrounded by a strongly structural garden created from 1997.**
WHERE **East Lothian, 20 miles east of Edinburgh.**
SIZE **1.5 acres.**
CONDITIONS **Exposed.**
SOIL **Clay.**
FEATURES **Courtyard garden, walled kitchen garden, landscape garden with sculpture and artifacts.**



The Dalrymples have created an immaculate courtyard garden that looks crisp and vibrant in winter, colourful and bright in summer. Its centrepiece is an iroko-wood aviary.

"I am one of those gardeners who hates gardening," says Robert Dalrymple. To ram the point home, pinned to the door of the potting shed is a quotation from *Times* columnist Damian Whitworth: 'I have always hated gardening. It is hard to think of any other activity in which the disparity between the happy idea of what it might be like and the tedious reality is so back-breakingly vast. I love a garden. I love being in a garden. I love looking at gardens and reading about gardens. It's just the gardening that I can't handle.' So it's not surprising that Robert and his wife Anna employ someone to look after the garden for them.

The combination of a dedicated professional gardener and an employer with a strong design sense (Robert is a book designer) makes for a bold, imaginative and finely wrought garden. The site is not easy, being at an elevation of 116m. Once a tenanted farm, the property was derelict by 1997. Over four years the Dalrymples converted the ruined farm buildings into a home, and then developed the garden.

Out of the mud

Anna is disarming about their inspiration. "Everything here is copied," she says. Their first source was a book, *Living by Design*, which records the conversion of a similar derelict farmyard in Dorset by interior designer John Stefanidis. "In the winter of 1998, when the site looked like a muddy film set for the Siege of Stalingrad, the glamorous pictures in that book gave us hope."

A key part of the garden's success is the relationship between Robert and Guy ▷

> “ *We are always looking at this bit of the garden, every day of the year, so it had to be evergreen, it had to look good through the long Scottish winter* ”

▷ Donaldson, the gardener. The development of the garden is charted in several volumes of ‘Guy’s Book’, a big publisher’s dummy (a cover but with blank pages, pictured left) that Robert fills with instructions for Guy.

In winter the overriding impression is of strong structures and a love of symmetry and geometry. This look has of course been endlessly repeated in gardens since the 18th century. At Broadwoodside, though, I first visited the garden in summer, and hardly even noticed the symmetry until I got home and looked at the photographs I had taken there. That’s because the garden’s geometry is clothed in plenty of interesting plants: particular species are used in blocks or repeated combinations, so the total species count is relatively low but the overall impact is stronger. This is a rare example of using perennials with discipline, sticking to those that make an impact over a long season.

An all-year garden

The balancing of variation with disciplined restraint is apparent in the central courtyard, a grid of 25 squares centred on an aviary (see opposite page). Several of the squares contain a clipped Norway maple (*Acer platanoides*). Perhaps best appreciated in the depths of winter, one square has been planted with box balls, others a variety of low evergreens. In some cases, an evergreen is paired with a bulb for spring or summer interest: *Ophiopogon bodinieri* with summer snowflake (*Leucojum aestivum*), great wood-rush (*Luzula sylvatica*) with drumstick alliums (*A. sphaerocephalon*), Japanese spurge (*Pachysandra terminalis*) with dark tulips (*T.* ‘Queen of Night’). “We are always looking at this bit of the garden, every day of the year, so it had to be evergreen, it had to look good through the long Scottish winter,” says Anna.

On the south side of the house is a partly walled kitchen garden, on the west side a less formal garden dominated by repeated combinations of perennials. To the north ‘gardening’ merges into ‘landscaping’ with views over the fields. A number of intriguing artifacts lie in this part of the garden – contemporary, but with that edge of 18th-century wit, erudition and willingness to use the garden for metaphor and allusion. Some reflect Robert and Anna’s appreciation of Ian Hamilton Finlay’s influential Little Sparta garden in Lanarkshire, famous for its artworks with classical allusions.

Broadwoodside evokes classical forms and plays with age-old themes of order and ornament, but in a way that is distinctly contemporary, marking itself out as a major new garden, all the more exciting for still being young and developing. □

TOP LEFT Small standard Norwegian maples (*Acer platanoides*) gives height to the courtyard garden.

CENTRE Owner Robert Dalrymple has made reams of notes on his plans for the garden – gardener Guy Donaldson’s job is to make them a reality. In the next picture, Robert and Guy discuss the latest plans with Robert’s wife Anna.

LEFT The gardens are designed to complement the superb restoration of the 17th-century farmhouse.

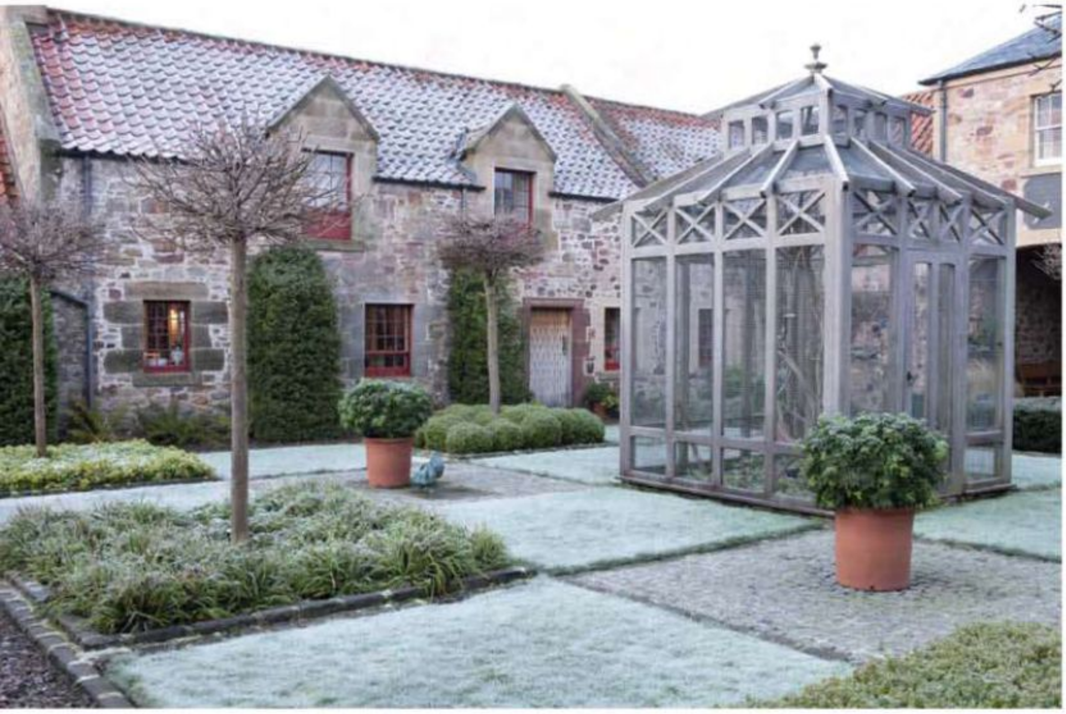
USEFUL INFORMATION

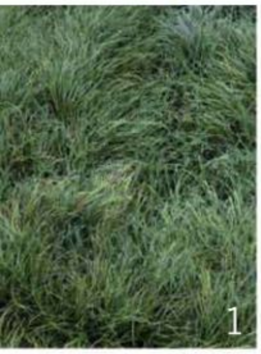
OPEN 5 June, 2011, under Scotland’s Garden Scheme. See www.gardensofscotland.org or call 0131 226 3714 for details.

ADDRESS Broadwoodside Farm, Gifford, near Haddington, East Lothian EH41 4JQ.

WEBSITE www.broadwoodside.co.uk

SUMMER SHOT BY RAY COX. 5 PETER STONE / ALAMY. 6 TODD IVINS / ALAMY. 7 TIM GAINEY / ALAMY





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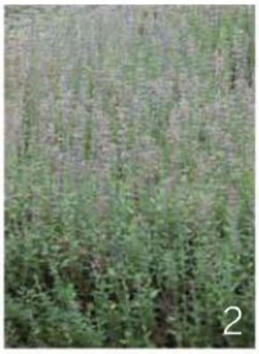

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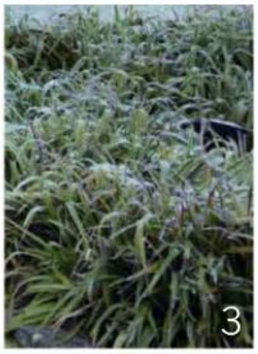

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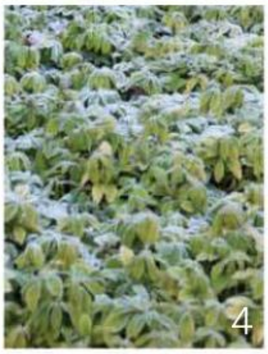

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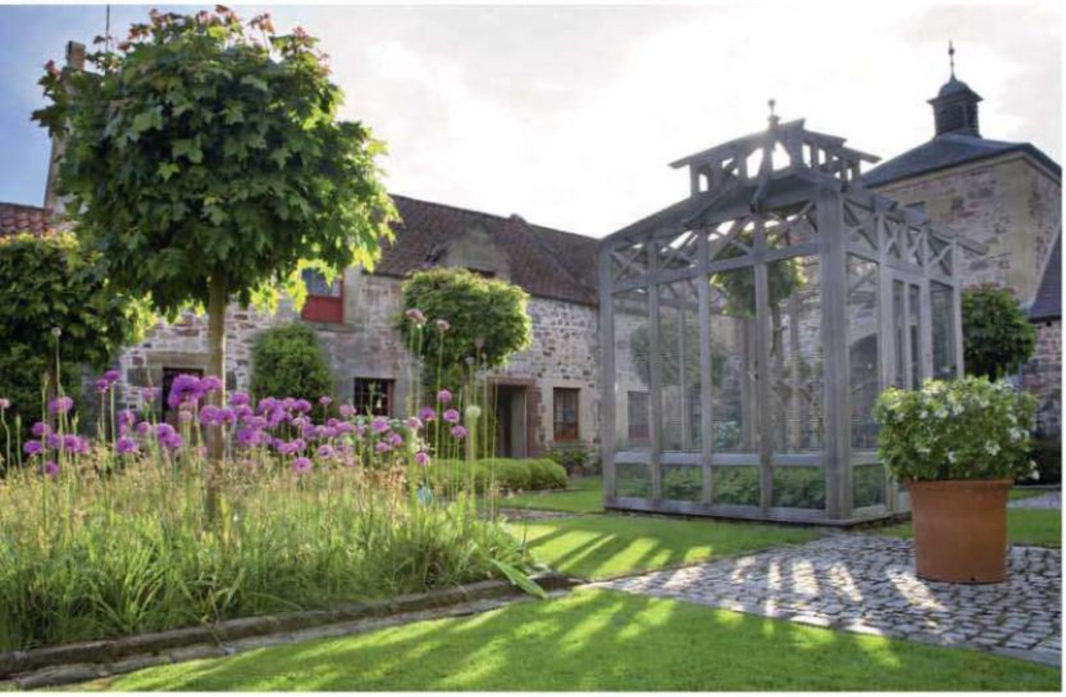

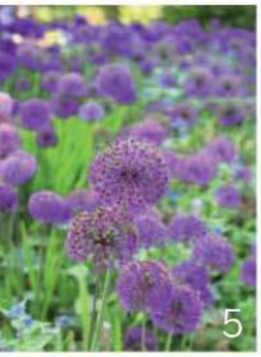

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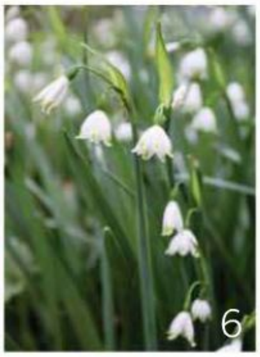

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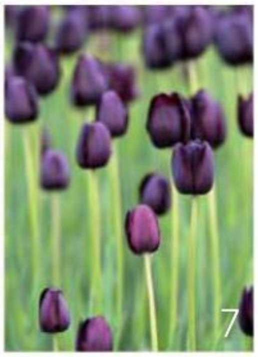

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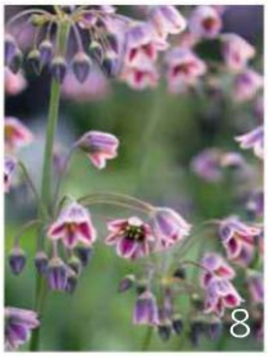


8

Planting for a year-round garden

The courtyard is divided into 25 squares, alternately paved, grassed or planted with evergreen ground covers that look good in winter. A succession of bulbs flower through the ground cover plants in spring and summer.

PLANTS FOR WINTER GROUND-COVER

1 *Ophiopogon bodinieri*
This quick-spreading plant has dark green, grassy foliage and pink flowers from July to September. Combine with snowdrops or crocuses.

2 *Teucrium chamaedrys*
Wall germander has evergreen foliage and small pink-purple flowers in summer; it grows up to 45cm tall. Plant with *Nectaroscordum siculum* (8, below).

3 *Luzula sylvatica*
The underrated native wood rush thrives in infertile or dry (but not too dry) shade. It's a strong-grower, 25cm tall, but needs an occasional tidy-up. Vigorous companions, such as English bluebells, will thrive.

4 *Pachysandra terminalis*
Well-established as a ground cover for shade, even where the soil is dry. Autumn-flowering crocuses (*Colchicum* species) would make for a good late-season bulb combination. 25cm high.

BULBS FOR UNDERPLANTING

5 *Allium hollandicum* 'Purple Sensation'
Spectacular round flower heads in late spring/early summer, maturing to good-looking seedheads for midsummer. It will even flower again later in the summer, as long as the foliage is not too shaded by surrounding plants.

6 *Leucojum aestivum* The summer snowflake bears pendant white flowers on 40cm stems in spring. It's remarkably tolerant of damp soils, even winter flooding, and builds into clumps over time.

7 *Tulipa* 'Queen of Night' This popular tulip flowers in mid to late spring, but doesn't always manage to produce flowers again the next year.

8 *Nectaroscordum siculum* Tall (70cm) stems in early summer bear intriguing bell-shaped flowers in cream flushed with pink or purple, followed by elegant seedheads. It usually flowers well in future years.

In brief

WHAT **Private garden owned by landscape architect Tom Stuart-Smith.**

WHERE **Hertfordshire.**

SIZE **Two acres.**

SOIL **Gravelly.**

CONDITIONS **South and west-facing; windy.**

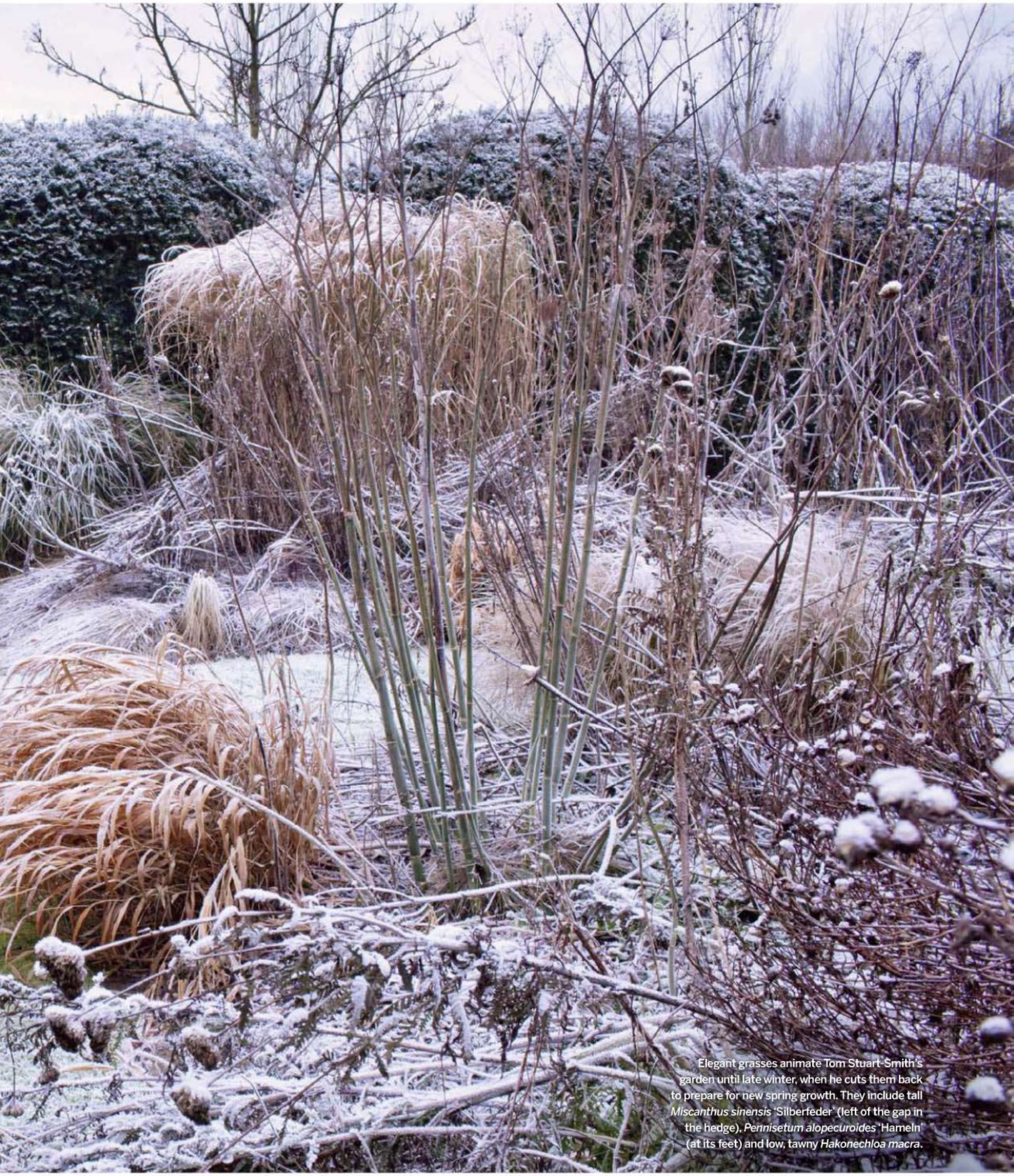
SPECIAL FEATURES **Landscape architect's garden featuring a relocated, redesigned Chelsea Flower Show garden.**

GARDEN PLAN **See page 50.**

Relax, it's the holiday season

Designer Tom Stuart-Smith relishes winter's down time and in his own private garden demonstrates the virtues of beauty in decline with his clever use of grasses, perennials and seedheads.

WORDS **MATTHEW WILSON** PHOTOGRAPHS **MARIANNE MAJERUS**



Elegant grasses animate Tom Stuart-Smith's garden until late winter, when he cuts them back to prepare for new spring growth. They include tall *Miscanthus sinensis* 'Silberfeder' (left of the gap in the hedge), *Pennisetum alopecuroides* 'Hameln' (at its feet) and low, tawny *Hakonechloa macra*.

Some gardeners remain unconvinced of the value of declining winter perennials, preferring to clear everything away with a grand cut-back in autumn. Tom and Sue Stuart-Smith's Hertfordshire garden admirably demonstrates the value of spent flowering perennials and grasses, but also the importance of the interplay between them and features of more structural substance.

I arrive to find Tom arranging long stems of red-berried *Crataegus persimilis* 'Prunifolia' (and being speared by a thorn for his troubles) in the living room of their home, a late 17th-century barn clad in black-painted weatherboard and a roof of weathered old clay tiles. Tom has known the place since childhood, when it was a functioning part of a working farm, sitting in a field of winter wheat.

The couple began to make a garden in 1987 from that barren field, when the extent of their land was far smaller, and have since been able to extend the garden to its now two acres. There has never been a 'grand plan', the garden instead evolving as its size increased. It began as a garden of rooms, but after a while Tom found that stultifying, so he began to demolish the walls. "Now it is like a Second World War bomb site with willowherb among the walls," says Tom approvingly.

Work on the garden began with the courtyard to the south of the house, which was originally planted with roses and cottage garden plants. "It was charming," says Tom, "but you could hardly get in to it, and then if you did you couldn't do anything."

A show garden revived

The chance to redesign the courtyard came in 2006 when the Stuart-Smiths acquired the hard landscaping materials, dominated by weathered steel water troughs and walls, that featured in his gold-medal winning Chelsea garden of that year from sponsor *The Daily Telegraph*. Tom's work is recognisable to many through his beautifully poised and composed show gardens, but it is unusual for these essentially temporary installations to succeed when

THIS PAGE, TOP LEFT Upright yews (*Taxus baccata* 'Fastigiata') punctuate the view back down the garden's main axis to the late 17th-century barn.

TOP RIGHT A simple timber bench provides a focal point against a billowing yew hedge.

RIGHT The structure of yew and beech hedges contrasts with loose forms of swaying grasses.

THIS PAGE, LEFT The simple repeated motif of box balls divides the west terrace from the swathe of grasses and dried perennial stems.

BOTTOM LEFT *Inula racemosa* bears yellow daisy-like flowers in summer; now its blackened stems stand in sharp relief against faded *Miscanthus* grasses.

BOTTOM RIGHT Tom's 2006 Chelsea show garden of weather steel containers, radically reconfigured, now occupies the south courtyard.

transplanted into the real world. Here, though, the garden works perfectly, primarily because, after a year of contemplation, Tom completely redesigned the components for the space. The rusty steel is especially appropriate to this farm setting, and particularly effective in winter when the planting has receded and the up-lit walls dominate, their colour matched by rusty brown grass *Hakonechloa macra*. At Chelsea the water troughs silently 'played' Wagner's *Tristan and Isolde* through a complex pump system, in part because, as Tom explains, "Wagner had a grip on me for 15 years and it was a means of sending him to a watery grave for a week," but the system was too tricky to install at home. "It was like an endless Wagnerian joke trying to get the 48 pumps to work," so the troughs are now simply still, reflective pools, their dark water providing a visual connection to the black boards of the barn.

> *"Tom has known the place since childhood, when it was a part of a farm, sitting in a field of winter wheat"*

A rose garden without roses

To the west of the barn, on gently rising ground, Tom made a central grassed path as the main axis away from the house. Here he planted a rose garden; deep borders within a framework of yew, hornbeam and box hedges. This worked for a few years until the fast-draining, gravelly soil and maturing hedges got the better of the roses. "I got tired of spraying them, and tired of feeling guilty about spraying them," says Tom. Now planted with mixed flowering perennials and grasses, but still referred to as the rose garden, in winter the bleached straw stems of *Miscanthus* provide a vertical accent against the curvaceously pruned yew hedge behind, with clumps ▷

Tom and Sue made their vegetable garden in 2008 using raised beds. LEFT Brussels sprouts taste sweeter after the year's first frosts.

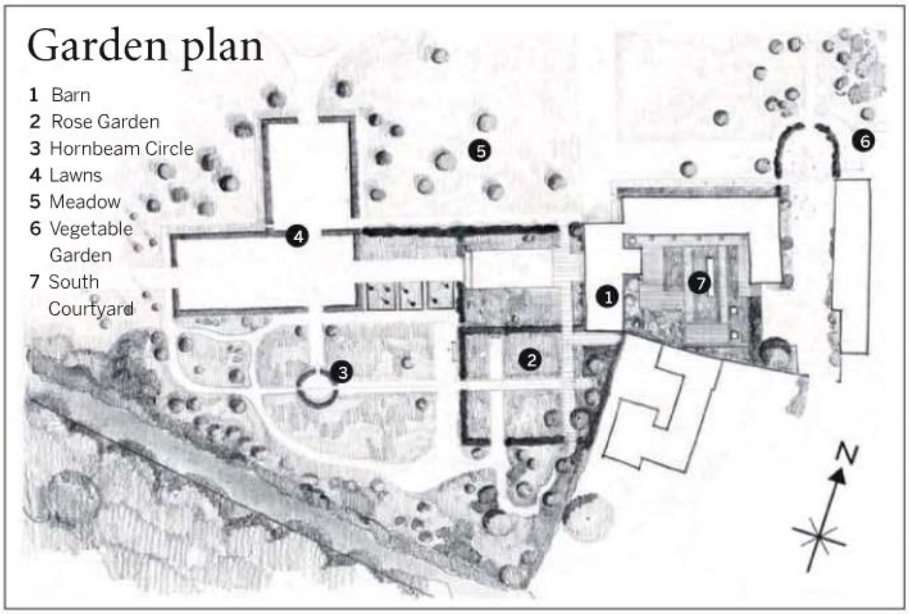
> *“I'm not fussed about flowers in winter, and not into making a garden that's in seasonal denial”*

▷ of *Anemanthele lessoniana*, *Calamagrostis* x *acutiflora* ‘Karl Foerster’ and *Panicum virgatum* in variety adding to the palette of faded colours. Tom says “I'm not fussed about flowers in winter, and not into making a garden that's in seasonal denial.” Instead, he relishes the openness and comparative bleakness brought on by winter, and the interplay between structure and the softer form of waning plants. This is evident throughout the garden, where structural plantings, hard landscaping and herbaceous plants appear perfectly balanced to the extent that even in winter no single component dominates. Simplicity of execution and the repetition of key features, such as the voluptuous yew hedges and hornbeam enclosures, help to define the spatial arrangement of the garden and are brought into relief once the ephemera of summer are going or gone.

Tom and Sue have continued to develop the garden, adding a vegetable garden in 2008. They are building a glasshouse and stripping a paddock ready for sowing with prairie plants, which will complement the adjoining wildflower meadows.

The garden demonstrates the virtues of beauty in decline. Tom says most people fail to find pleasure in the changes wrought by the arrival of cold weather. In contrast, “I enjoy the move to the sparseness of winter. I feel no need to try and patch up my garden to get it through to spring.” And there is another motivation. “I rather like not being able to garden so much in winter,” he confesses. ☐

• For details of National Gardens Scheme open days at Tom's garden next year see *The Yellow Book 2011*, published in February.



TOM STUART-SMITH

7 Winter belles

Plants with stems or seedheads that will look striking in your garden until spring

1 *Aster umbellatus*
Tom has used this classy late-flowering perennial in bold clumps.

2 *Hakonechloa macra*
The golden variegated form of this grass has been a garden favourite for years, but Tom was an early advocate of the green form, which fades admirably.

3 *Ilex aquifolium*
"We use quite a bit of common holly in the garden, as there is a lot of it in the hedges and woodland round about," says Tom. "It makes an excellent host for rambling roses and honeysuckle and shines beautifully in the winter sun."

4 *Dipsacus fullonum*
The native teasel is a fine structural plant, and the oil-rich seeds are much loved by goldfinches.

5 *Cenolophium denudatum*
Tom used this understatedly lovely umbellifer in his 2010 Chelsea garden. It shows its true value long after the flowers have faded, with elegant dried seedheads.

6 *Phlomis russeliana*
A great, trouble-free all-rounder with decent foliage and pale yellow whorls of flower that reduce to blackened seedheads, held on wiry stems.

7 *Eryngium giganteum*
The silvery white thistle known as Miss Willmott's ghost has the air of winter about it even in summer, and the strength and fortitude to stand tall once the cold sets in.

Topher Delaney

The Californian conceptual artist likes to weave her clients' childhood memories into the gardens she designs

WORDS ANNIE GATTI PHOTOGRAPH CHARLIE HOPKINSON

Topher Delaney, the San Francisco-based conceptual garden designer, is on a rare visit to the UK. When we meet for breakfast she has already been on a dawn recce of the London skyline, camera in hand, and excitedly shows me her images of stands of mature trees against a backdrop of industrial buildings somewhere south of the river.

At 62, Topher is still hungrily responding to and capturing her surroundings – one suspects this will never change. As one of the world's leading conceptual designers of private and public spaces, she has a reputation for bold, modernist hard landscaping and structures that make use of metals, synthetic materials, off-the-shelf products, fluorescent lighting and strong colours. Plants play a major role in her work too, and she feels passionately that conceptual artists (her preferred description) should know them well, just as painters should know how to grind paint.

> *"I'm not interested in outrage, I am about invitation. I am in awe of nature and the processes we go through, of birth, life, decay, death and renewal"*

Looking at a selection of Topher's work, from rooftop spaces to shopping malls, hospital gardens to country estates, it's clear that each design is sharply individual, even if some of the elements, such as her use of barcodes and fire, become leitmotifs. Taking her cue from the site and from the person or organisation commissioning her, she creates spaces that are imbued with narratives but which must also engage all the senses. "I'm not interested in outrage," she explains, "I am about invitation. I am in awe of nature and the processes we go through, of birth, life, decay, death and renewal."

She also sees her role as a commentator on various aspects of society. She learned to be independent and think for herself at a young age. Having spent her first six years living in Paris with her mother, a photographer, she returned to the States with French as her first language. She developed an affinity with the land in the mountains and intimate valleys of North Wyoming where, she says, the light is strong and the seasons distinct.

Her parents were part of the art scene in New York, where she studied at Barnard College, majoring in cultural anthropology. The sculptor Isamu Noguchi became a particular friend of hers, advising her to try landscape architecture when she told him that she wanted to be an artist and work with the land.

Determined to establish her own identity, Topher decided to complete her landscape architecture degree far away from New York, and applied to Berkeley in California, where she supported herself by working at a restaurant in the evenings. On graduating, and with a good grounding in engineering and geology, she knew she wanted to make gardens. She immersed herself in horticulture, joining societies, devouring books and getting first-hand experience of growing.

Her first clients were customers of the restaurant and at the age of 25 she established her own team of contractors – initially a group of friends, four Harvard graduates who were taking time out. "It was the most educated construction team in the West Coast," she laughs. Now, nearly 40 years on, her team of four includes an architect, industrial designer and graphic designer.

Topher says some clients simply ask her to make an installation – they don't want to be involved in the creative process. But mostly it is a collaborative relationship that, with private clients, starts with Topher asking where they spent their first six years. "If I'm going to work with someone, I need to know that. If I can imbue their garden with memories of where they grew up they will probably not sell their house for a long time." Once clients agree with Topher's final design, however, she oversees the execution of it to the last detail.

Increasingly the things that drive her are urban infrastructures and exploring our relationship to nature through food and medicinal plants. The Medicinal and Botanical Garden at the medical campus of the University of California combines the texture, form and colour of plants with her love of narrative in gardens – each of the 30 steel-edged raised beds is inscribed with the scientific names of the plants it contains. "I used plants such as loquats, which are pharmacologically connected to courses of treatments for cancer, because people are interested in themselves and their health," she explains. "If they understand that if a plant does not exist then their drug does not exist, they start to get interested." For those not engaged with the medical side, there are blocks of colour from the planting which, she says, will cheer them up. "I believe my work must deliver on many levels."□

NEXT MONTH John Hoyland

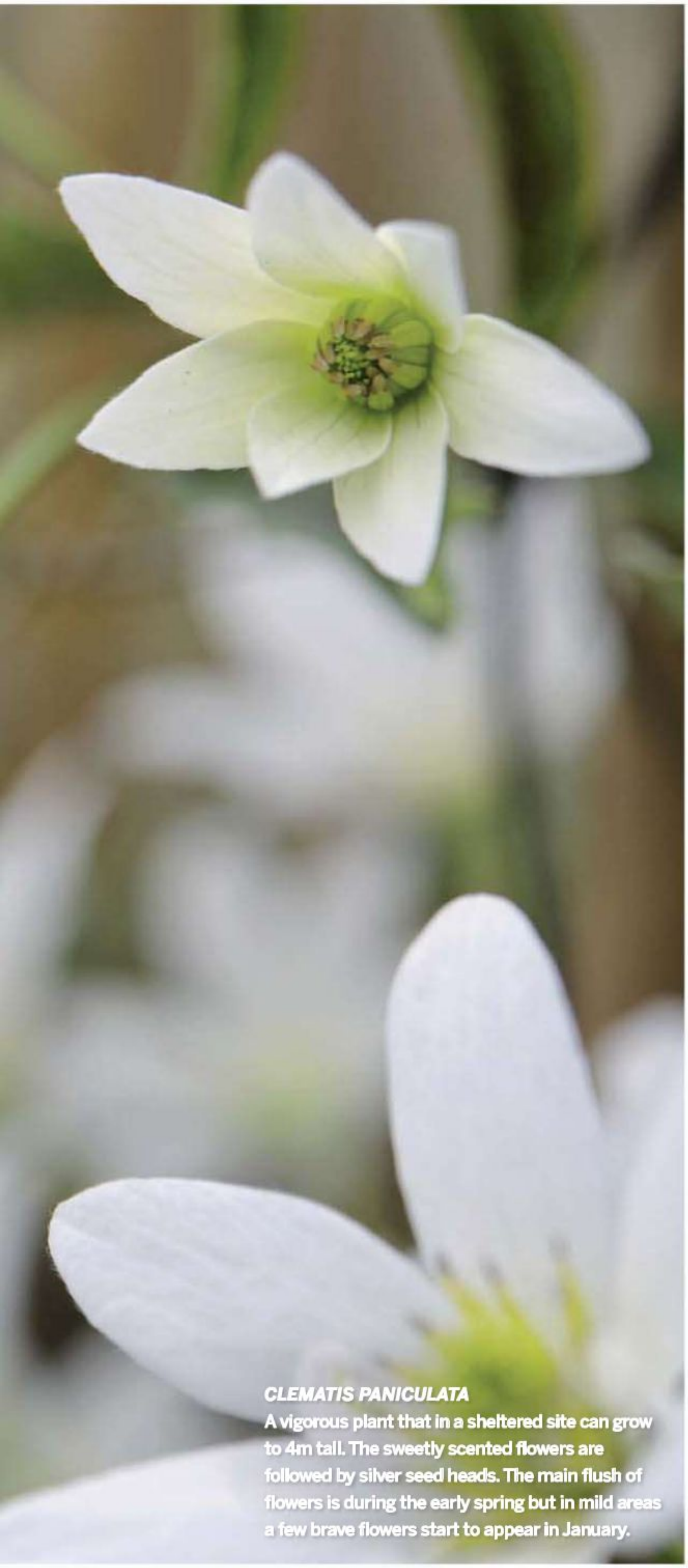
Winter clematis

Celebrate the season with a show of fragrant flowers

WORDS **JOHN HOYLAND** PHOTOGRAPHS **JASON INGRAM**

In brief

WHAT **Winter-flowering, evergreen and semi-evergreen climbing forms of a large genus of more than 200 species. Part of the *Ranunculaceae* (buttercup) family.**
SIZE **Vigorous forms such as *Clematis armandii* may spread 5m or more.**
CONDITIONS **Some forms are frost tender.**
SEASON **This *Plant Profile* focuses on clematis that flower in winter.**
ORIGINS **Clematis are found around the world, including Europe, Australasia, China and the Americas.**



CLEMATIS PANICULATA
A vigorous plant that in a sheltered site can grow to 4m tall. The sweetly scented flowers are followed by silver seed heads. The main flush of flowers is during the early spring but in mild areas a few brave flowers start to appear in January.

John Hoyland is a plantsman, garden writer and owner of Pioneer Nurseries in Letchworth, Hertfordshire.

Plants that sing during the winter should be treasured far more than those that are part of the chorus of high summer. At the start of winter, one of the moments I look forward to is seeing the first few tentative flowers on the *Clematis cirrhosa* that covers the woodshed. I know that by January the plant will be a blanket of creamy-yellow bells.

C. cirrhosa is one of several evergreen and semi-evergreen clematis that, although they have no formal botanical grouping, all flower during the winter and early spring. *C. cirrhosa* grows wild in countries bordering the Mediterranean, and one variety, *C. cirrhosa* var. *balearica* (pictured on page 57), is from Majorca. Both forms have been used by plant breeders to produce a range of cultivars.

C. cirrhosa is sometimes described as 'semi-evergreen'. This apparent *non sequitur* means that in cooler climates the plant may lose its leaves in summer. [If this happens, resist the temptation to cut back the bare stems, as this will take away the following season's flowers.] This phenomenon is nearly always seen in the exotic-looking *Clematis napaulensis* (formerly known as *C. forrestii*; pictured on page 60). The foliage reappears in November, with clusters of greenish-yellow nodding flowers that have startling purple stamens. Except in the mildest parts of Britain, this plant should be grown in a cool greenhouse or conservatory.

Kiwi clematis

New Zealand is the home to a dozen species of clematis, most of which are evergreen. Some species have been grown in Britain since the 18th century, while others were only discovered 50 years ago. In the wild in New Zealand the most common is *Clematis paniculata* (pictured left), whose Maori name translates as 'flower of the skies'. This hints at the height the plant grows to in the forest: so high that the white flowers appear to be hanging down from the sky. It is revered as a harbinger of spring, as it should be here in ▷

▷ the northern hemisphere, where its scented flowers sweeten the January air.

About 40 years ago a new species was discovered growing in the mountains on the South Island of New Zealand. *Clematis marmoraria* is a dwarf plant (about 10cm tall) that has leathery, dark green leaves and a mass of small greeny white flowers. The plant became popular with alpine enthusiasts and has served as a parent of a new generation of hybrids, including 'Pixie' and 'Fragrant Oberon' (page 58).

Joe Cartman, a New Zealand botanist, was among the first to cross the dwarf newcomer with the big boy, *C. paniculata*. The result is a range of hybrids named in his honour as *C.* x *cartmanii*. The first of these, 'Joe' (page 58), is still one of the most popular. The success of this hybrid has led to the breeding of several more cultivars.

The most popular evergreen clematis is probably *C. armandii* (page 59), from China, Burma and Vietnam, which starts to flower in February. Its long, dark green, shiny leaves provide a perfect background for the clusters of white flowers. A number of its cultivars produce more flowers, and with more fragrance, than seed-raised forms, but all are vigorous and need space to romp. They are not for a small garden.

With plenty of new plants in the pipeline, we should never be short of the sparkle and joy of winter flowers. □

• More of John's choices of winter-flowering *Clematis* feature over the next five pages. ▷

SUPPLIERS

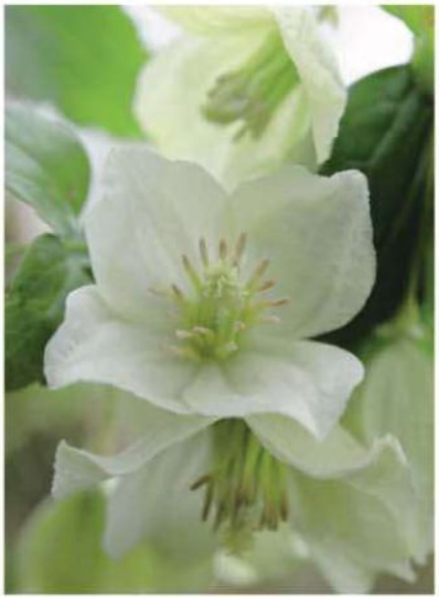
County Park Nursery
Essex Gardens, Hornchurch,
Essex RM11 3BU. Tel 01708 445205,
www.countyparknursery.co.uk

Priorswood Clematis Nursery
Widbury Hill, Ware, Herts SG12 7QH.
Tel 01920 461543,
www.priorswoodclematis.co.uk

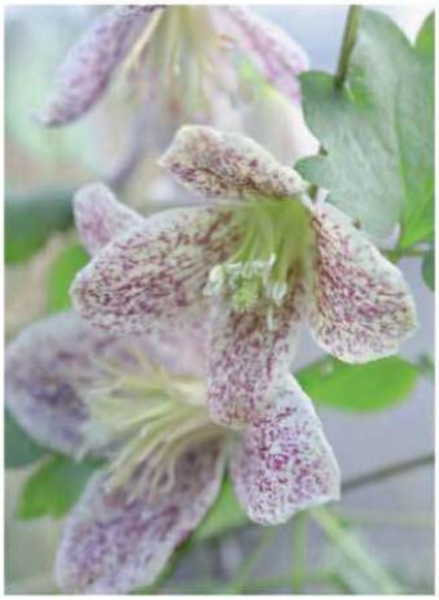
Taylors Clematis
Sutton Road, Sutton, Askern,
Doncaster DN6 9JZ. Tel 01302 700716,
www.taylorsclematis.co.uk

NEXT MONTH Amazing annuals

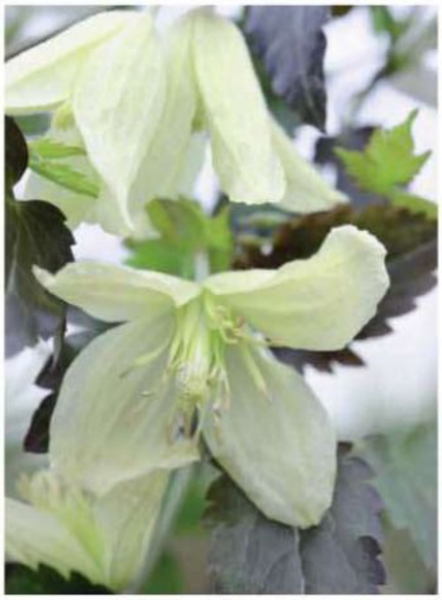
Autumn and winter cultivars



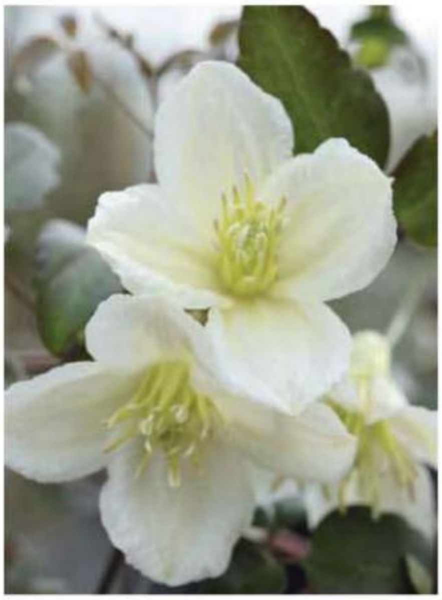
***CLEMATIS CIRRHOSA* 'WISLEY CREAM'**
First raised in the 1970s, this cultivar has proved to be a robust and undemanding plant that blooms from November to March. The flowers have a green tinge when they first open and fade to a creamy white with age.



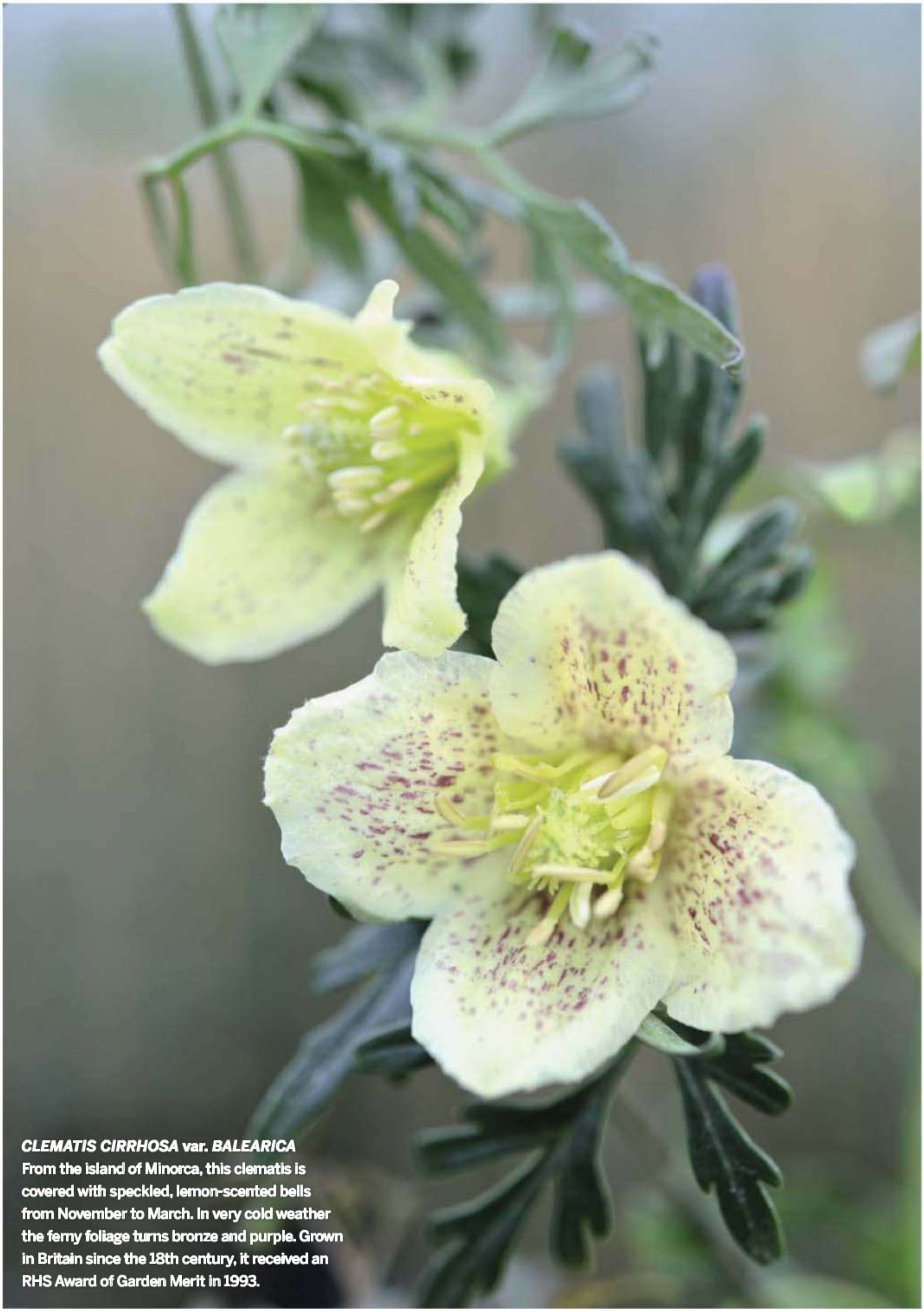
***C. CIRRHOSA* var. *PURPURASCENS* 'FRECKLES'**
Dark pink speckles on the inside of the flower glow through to the outside of the petals, giving the whole flower a pink blush. This cultivar blooms between October and February.



***C. CIRRHOSA* 'OURIKA VALLEY'**
The most floriferous *C. cirrhosa* flowers from December to March. The tepals are longer and narrower than the species. The name refers to a part of Morocco where seed of the original plant was collected during the 1980s.



***C. CIRRHOSA* 'JINGLE BELLS'**
The first *C. cirrhosa* cultivar to start flowering, in the autumn. Creamy yellow buds open to flowers that fade from cream to white with age. Reputedly the hardiest *C. cirrhosa*, thriving even in cold parts of the North.



CLEMATIS CIRRHOSA **var.** ***BALEARICA***
From the island of Minorca, this clematis is covered with speckled, lemon-scented bells from November to March. In very cold weather the ferny foliage turns bronze and purple. Grown in Britain since the 18th century, it received an RHS Award of Garden Merit in 1993.

Growing winter clematis

HARDINESS

Clematis x *cartmanii* and associated hybrids were originally thought too tender to grow outdoors in Britain. In fact they will thrive in sheltered places that do not drop below -5°C during the winter, as long as they are protected from cold, drying winds. In colder areas, grow in pots in cool greenhouses or conservatories.

Cold winds are also the enemy of *Clematis armandii* so choose a sheltered spot in sun or part-shade.

IDEAL CONDITIONS

In general clematis prefer moist conditions but *C. cirrhosa* must be kept dry, especially during the winter. An ideal place to plant it is on a south or west-facing house wall where the eves of the roof protect the soil from heavy downpours.

Clematis need rich, moist soil with a cool root-run, so plant low-growing shrubs or perennials close to the base to shade the soil.

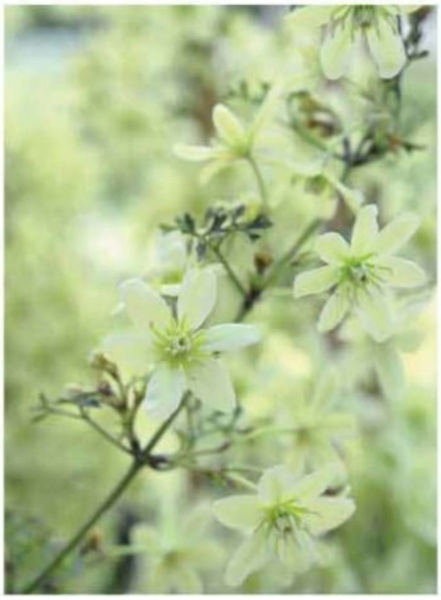
C. armandii needs to be well fed, so apply a generous mulch of compost every autumn.

PLANT SUPPORTS

C. cirrhosa will need support at first by tying the stems in to 1m canes. As it becomes established it will twine itself around wires, posts or trellis.

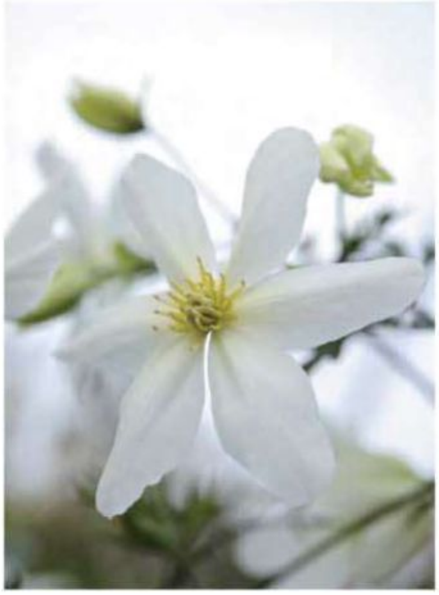
Clematis x *cartmanii* hybrids are not twining plants so they are unable to support themselves when grown as climbers. They can be left to sprawl along the ground or to flow over the edge of pots.

Late-winter cultivars



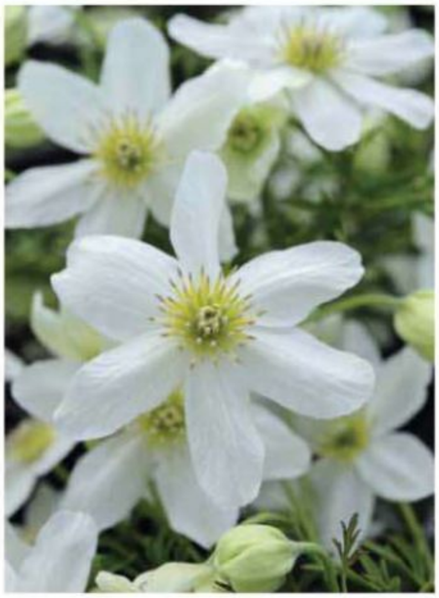
C. 'PIXIE'

This New Zealand hybrid bears small buds like green berries for weeks. They begin to flower, sparsely, from January, then profusely from March to May. The leaves are fern-like and grow from thin, wiry stems. Up to 1m tall.



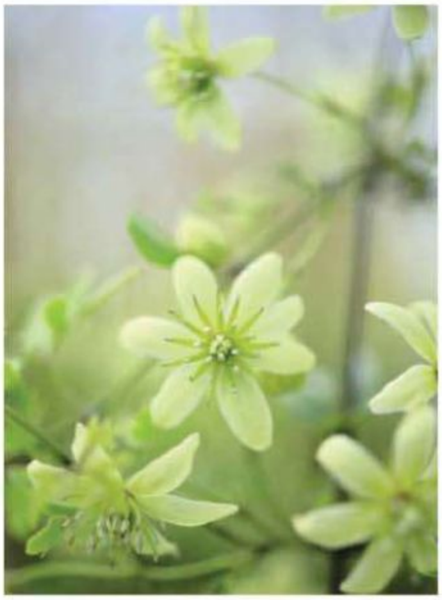
***C.* x *CARTMANII* 'AVALANCHE'**

This lives up to its name, with masses of white flowers, up to 6cm across, from February to April. The dark leaves are like parsley and the purple stems are a bonus after flowering. It holds an RHS Award of Garden Merit.



***C.* x *CARTMANII* 'JOE'**

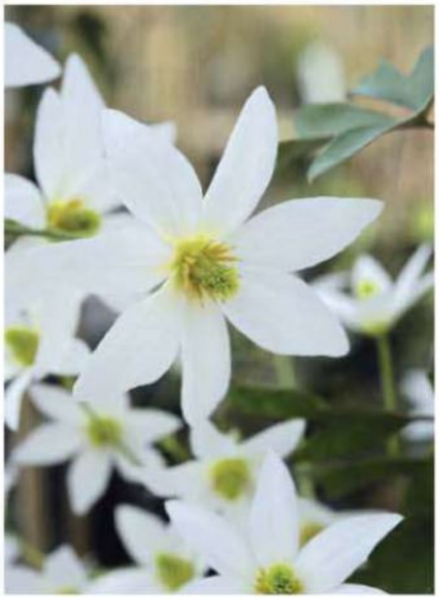
Fat buds, full of promise, start to appear in January and grow like bunches of grapes for several weeks until opening. The flowers are as close as you can get to a buttercup, a relative in the *Ranunculaceae* family.



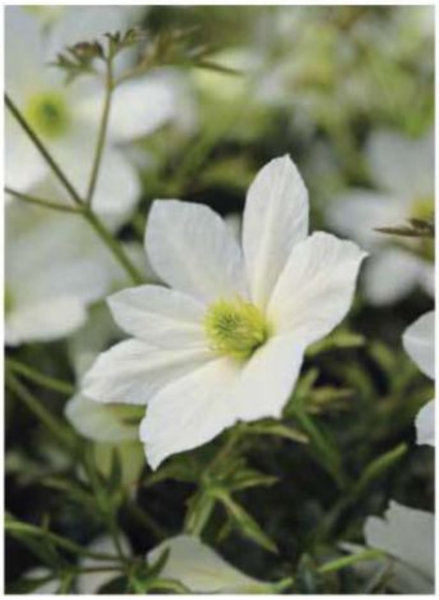
C. 'FRAGRANT OBERON'

Another recent hybrid of two New Zealand species, bred in the early 1990s but only available for the last year or so. It has strongly perfumed flowers, each about 3cm wide, from February to May. Up to about 1.5m tall.

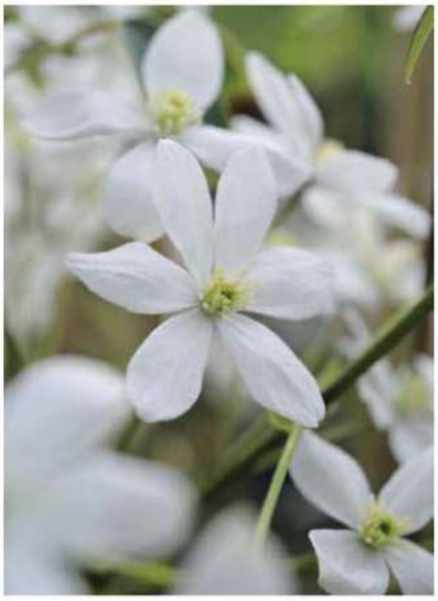
> “Clematis paniculata *is revered as a harbinger of spring... its scented flowers sweeten the January air*”



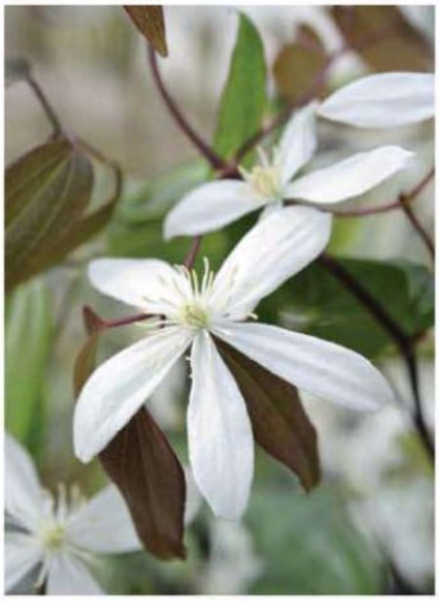
CLEMATIS PANICULATA* var. *LOBATA
The flowers are slightly larger than the species, but just as sweetly scented. The new leaves have roughly toothed edges, but this disappears as the plant matures. Flowers from January, and more profusely from early spring.



***C.* 'EARLY SENSATION'**
The buds of this plant dangle but turn up as the flowers open, from February to April. The base of the petals is apple green, making a crisp contrast with the dark, waxy foliage. This non-clinging climber grows up to 2m tall.



CLEMATIS ARMANDII
Big, leathery leaves emerge copper-coloured, maturing to a shiny green. Clusters of pink-tinged buds open to white flowers from February to May. The perfume from hundreds of flowers on mature plants can be powerful.



***C. ARMANDII* 'SNOWDRIFT'**
Just as vigorous and sweetly scented as the species, this cultivar flowers at the same time, but the tepals are narrow and slightly twisted, so they look star-like. Best planted in a south-facing, sunny situation away from cold winds.

Pruning winter clematis

TO CONTROL GROWTH

C. armandii and *C. cirrhosa* are vigorous plants that need regular pruning to be kept under control.

- They flower on growth made the previous year, so wait until they have finished flowering before doing any pruning.
- Cut back growth to about 1m below the area you want the plant to cover.
- After three or four years both *C. armandii* and *C. cirrhosa* may develop dense, woody 'bird nest' growth. Cut back about one third of the plant to the base and repeat the process on the other two thirds in subsequent years.

TO STIMULATE FLOWERING

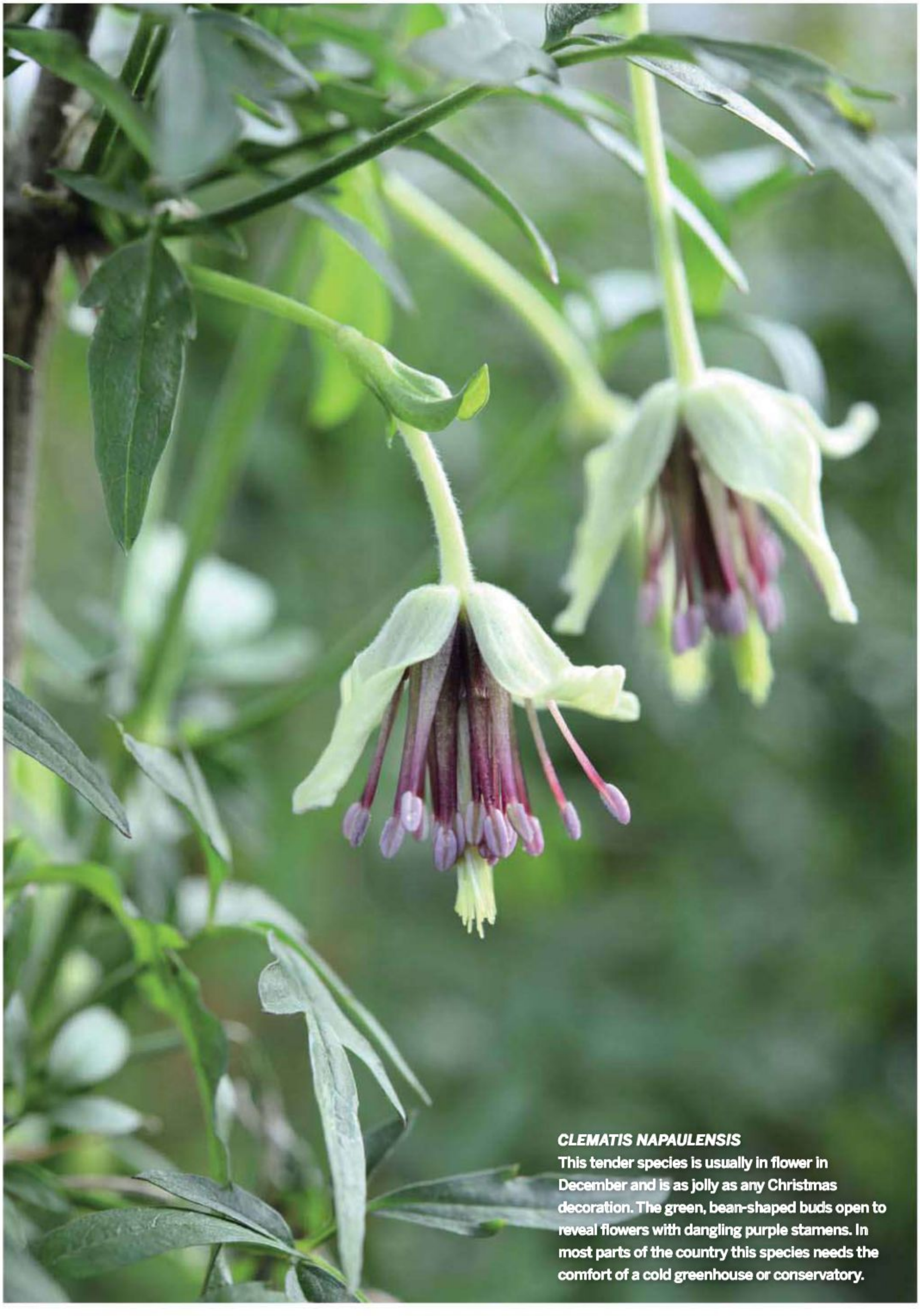
Clematis 'Early Sensation', and the *cartmanii* hybrids produce so many flowers that they often exhaust themselves and generate little in the way of new growth. To keep the plants vigorous and healthy, prune them in two stages:

- Trim them immediately after the flowers have finished, to remove the dying flower heads and prevent any energy being lost in seed production.
- At the end of May, cut the whole plant back to about 50cm from the soil, to encourage new growth and prevent the plant from becoming bare and woody at the base.

TO THICKEN GROWTH

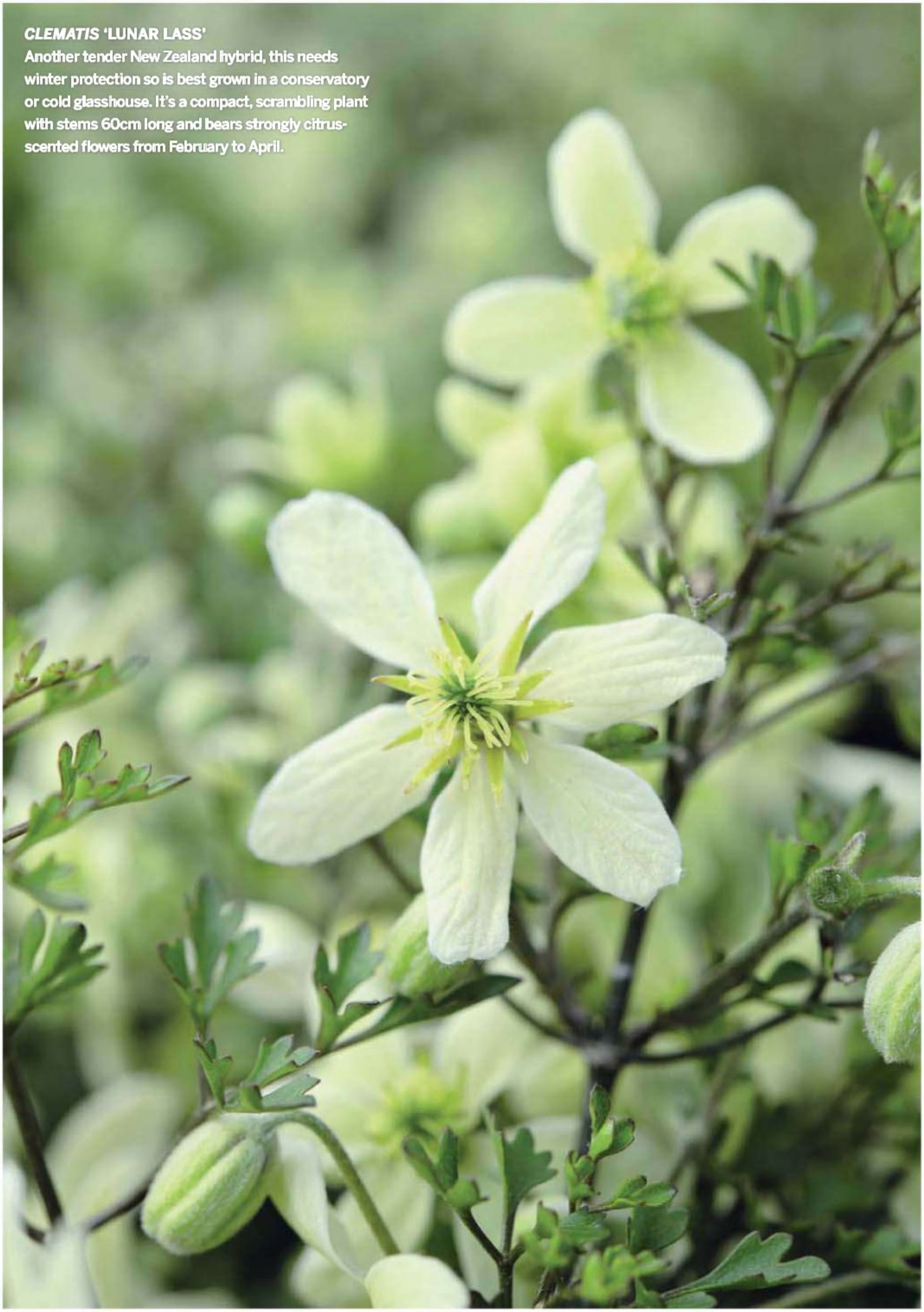
C. paniculata tends to be spindly, but looks better with bushy growth.

- For a few years after planting, cut back to 60cm from the ground.
- Once it has become bushy, allow it to grow into the size you want and then trim it back each year after flowering.

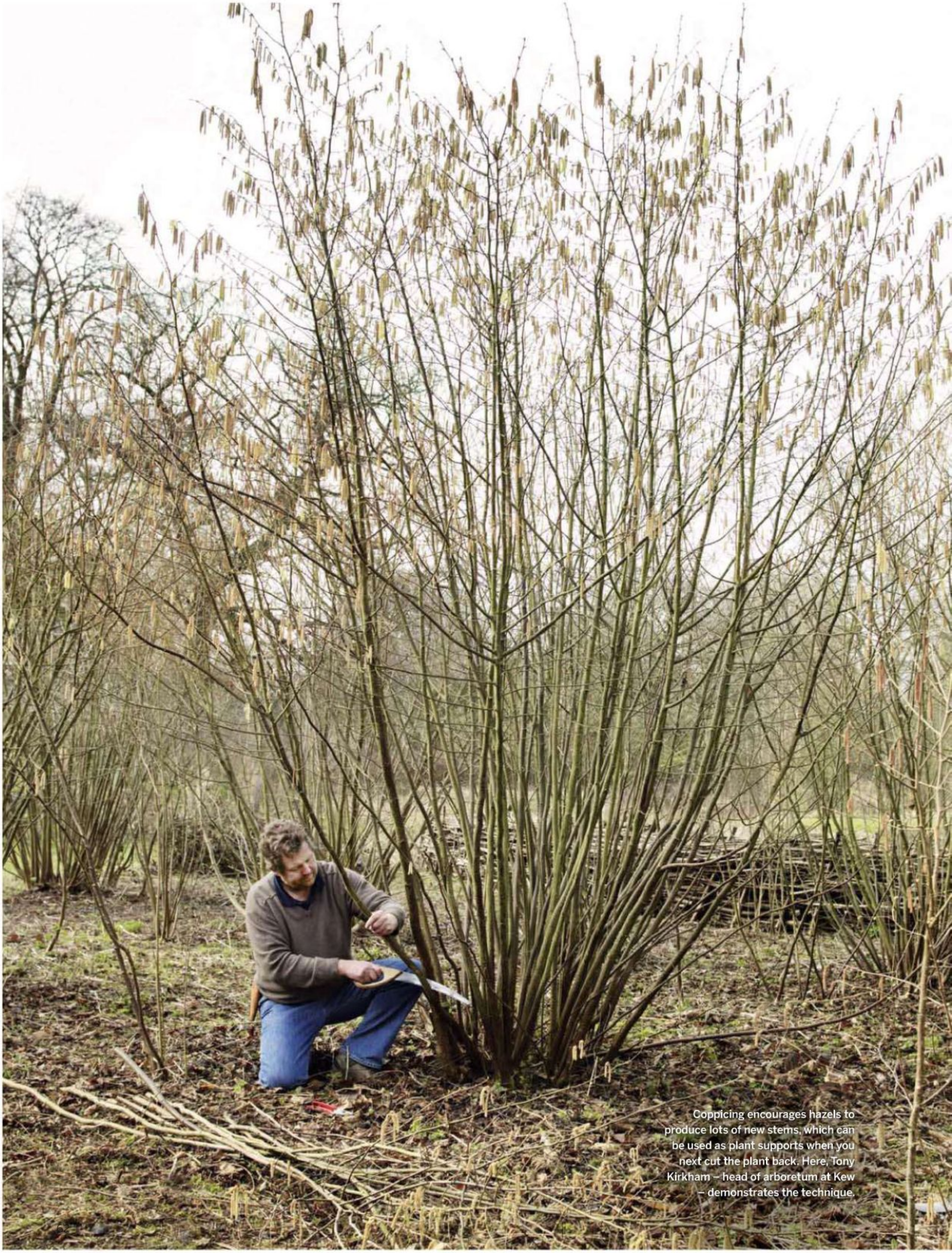


CLEMATIS NAPAULENSIS

This tender species is usually in flower in December and is as jolly as any Christmas decoration. The green, bean-shaped buds open to reveal flowers with dangling purple stamens. In most parts of the country this species needs the comfort of a cold greenhouse or conservatory.



***CLEMATIS* 'LUNAR LASS'**
Another tender New Zealand hybrid, this needs winter protection so is best grown in a conservatory or cold glasshouse. It's a compact, scrambling plant with stems 60cm long and bears strongly citrus-scented flowers from February to April.



Coppicing encourages hazels to produce lots of new stems, which can be used as plant supports when you next cut the plant back. Here, Tony Kirkham – head of arboretum at Kew – demonstrates the technique.

The kindest cut

Some shrubs and trees thrive on tough love – so steel yourself and cut them right back to the ground to encourage bright new stems and foliage

WORDS CAMILLA PHELPS PHOTOGRAPHS ANDREW MONTGOMERY

BBC Camilla Phelps is a writer, gardener and website editor, currently working across the BBC's learning campaigns

Coppicing requires a leap of faith for the average gardener. You have to be prepared to cut plants back hard – right to the ground. It seems like harsh treatment. So why do it?

One of the key by-products is that your tree or shrub is guaranteed to respond with vigorous new growth. This allows you to manipulate its shape and size more easily. Depending on the plant, it may also stimulate vibrantly coloured new stems and dramatic foliage effects.

Coppiced trees also increase in breadth to provide good screening; and they can be treated like shrubs and used in borders with perennials and ground cover planting.

As well as the ornamental benefits, coppicing can be a practical solution for managing a large established tree in a small garden. For example, if you have a tree near a house on clay soil, coppicing will slow down root-growth and help to manage the threat of subsidence. Complete removal of a big tree could have far more serious consequences.

Tony Kirkham, head of arboriculture at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, advises: "If a tree is in danger of becoming too big for its location, you are better off managing it rather than removing it completely. You can grow it to a size that fits in with your garden and that you can deal with."

A natural effect

Coppicing exploits the natural growth pattern of trees: if the main stem has been cut or has fallen, it will send up shoots in a bid to survive. Essentially, if the root system has been used to feeding a large tree, it will put its energy into producing new growth and foliage.

Once an essential part of woodland management, coppiced trees were vital to the ancient economy, providing fuel, building and fencing materials. Today, conservationists are bringing back coppicing to increase biodiversity – cutting trees back opens up woodland, letting in light and encouraging a wider range of plants and wildlife.

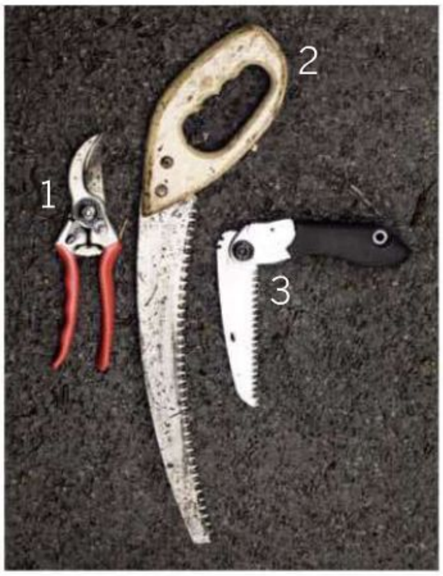
In the past, sweet chestnut and hornbeam were the commonly grown for coppicing. But most trees will respond positively to a 'brutal' chop – as long as the tree is well established and has not been grafted.

The size and style of our gardens usually restricts our choice of trees. While plenty of smaller trees are prized for their bark, flowers and autumn foliage, larger-growing species are often left out of the equation. However, by managing trees and large shrubs as coppiced specimens, you can open up a whole new world of choice and ornamental potential.

▷

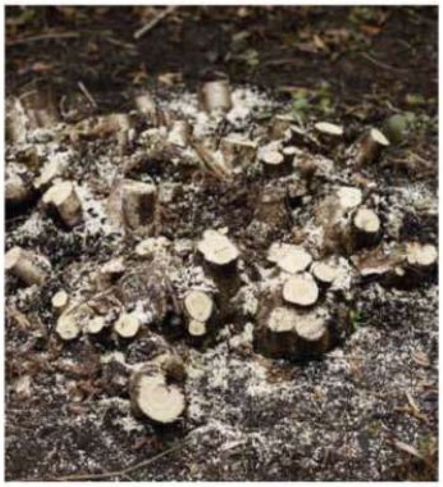
Coppicing tool kit

1 Felco No 2 secateurs (or No 9 if you are left-handed)
2 A sharp pruning saw
3 Short bladed Silky Fox saw
• NOTE Don't use long-handled loppers for the final cut. The blades can often squash the stems, causing bruising, which leads to die-back and subsequent rotting.

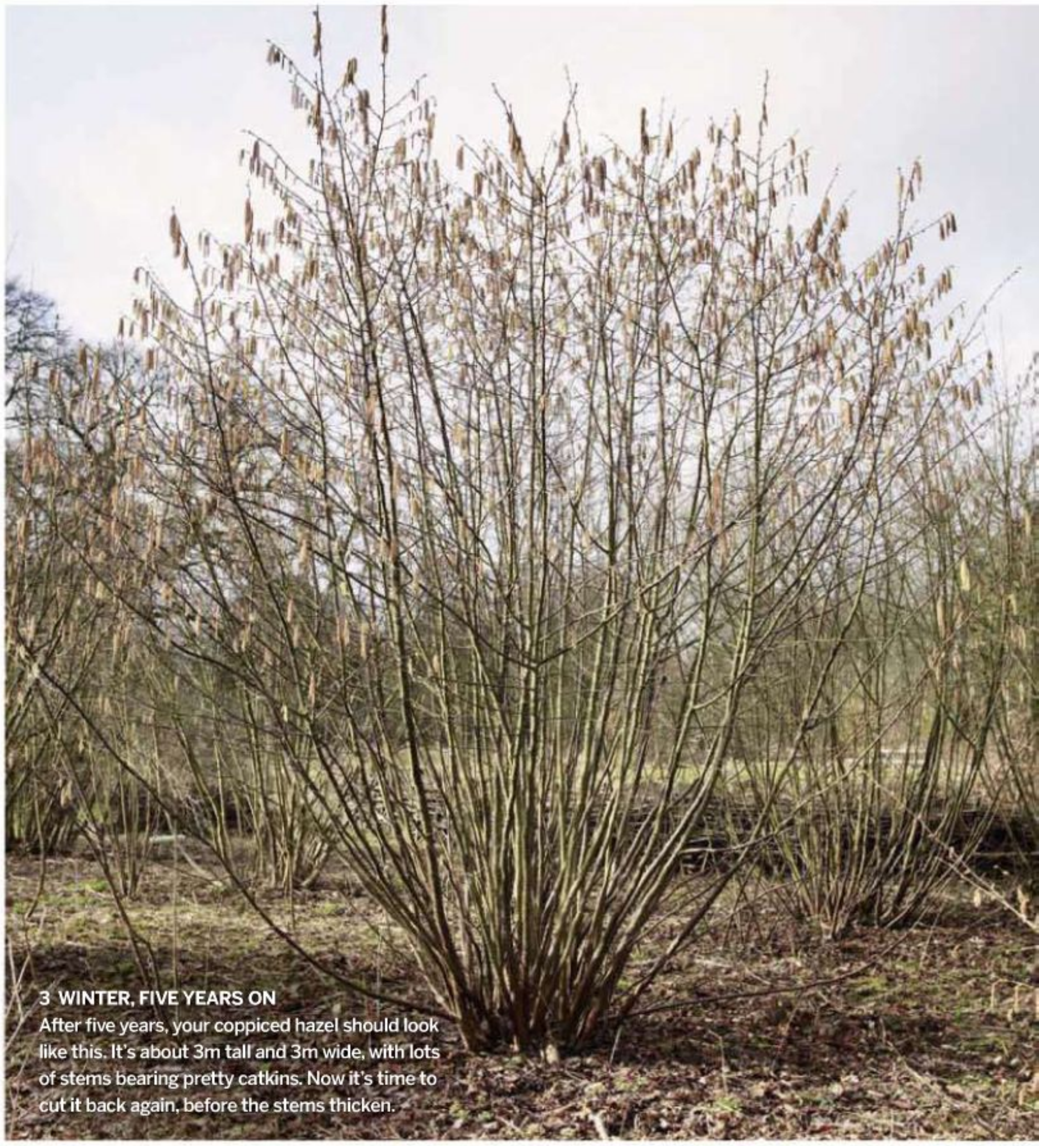


Thanks to the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, for allowing us to take the photographs used in this feature. For visitor information, call 020 8332 5655 or see the website at www.kew.org

1 SUMMER: LEAFY STEMS
This hazel has previously been coppiced, so instead of growing into a single-stemmed tree it has lots of bushy stems. A lot of energy goes into new growth; coppicing every three to five years allows the plants to recover.



2 LATE WINTER OR SPRING: CUTBACK
Use a sharp saw to cut the larger branches to ensure a clean cut. Remaining stems, or the stool, should be no more than 5cm from the ground.



3 WINTER, FIVE YEARS ON
After five years, your coppiced hazel should look like this. It's about 3m tall and 3m wide, with lots of stems bearing pretty catkins. Now it's time to cut it back again, before the stems thicken.

▷ Long, straight stems: hazel

Coppiced hazel (*Corylus avellana*) has been valued for centuries for the long, straight stems that grow in response to a hard prune. Today, with local or home-grown products increasingly popular, these provide perfect plant supports for beans and other herbaceous climbers in place of imported bamboo, as well as being used for fencing hurdles.

Coppiced hazels have a broad, open habit, with branches carrying leaves in airy, horizontal layers. They also look beautifully ornamental in spring with long male catkins on the bare stems.

PLANTING Coppiced hazels look good in groups of three or five, if you have room, and this will give you a rotation that works both from a practical and an ornamental point of view. If you grow vegetables, alternating the coppicing of the individual plants would allow you to be self-sufficient in pea sticks and poles. Hazel is also a good choice to include in a natural, woodland inspired planting scheme, complementing lower-growing spring bulbs and ferns.

CUTTING Cutting back can wait until late spring, after the catkins have dropped. For best results and more robust stems, coppicing on a rotation of at least every 5-10 years is recommended, as this gives the roots a chance to establish.

When tackling a hazel, remove branches in stages. Take out the outer stems first and work your way into the centre of the stool.

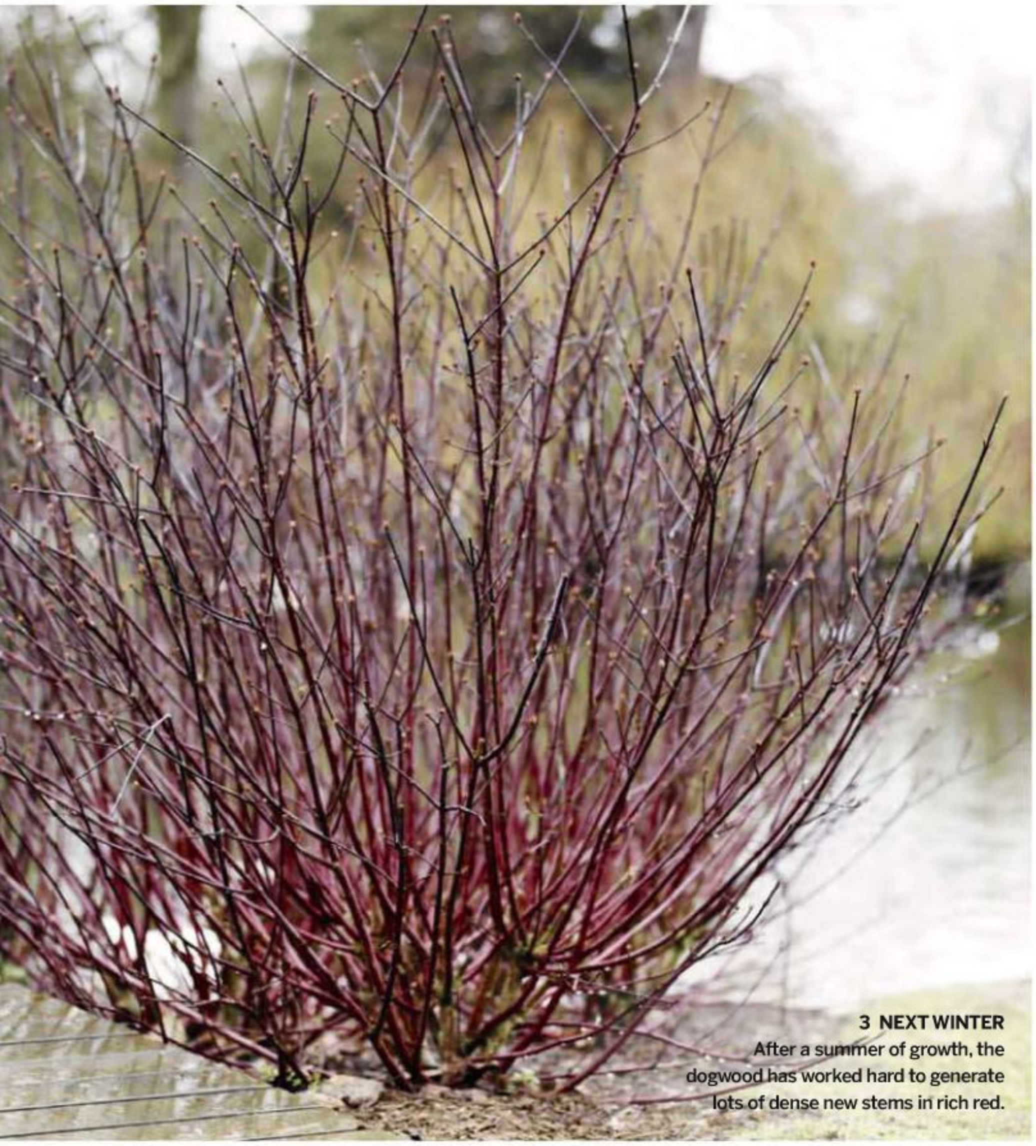
It's easier to get a good clean stool once you have cut stems down to around 30cm. The end result should be no more than 5cm above the ground.

ALTERNATIVES

Red oak
It's rare to see now, but there was a tradition of coppicing oaks for boat building because the regrowth is often curved, and was much prized for making keels. The young foliage of *Quercus rubra* would make an unusual addition to an ornamental border.

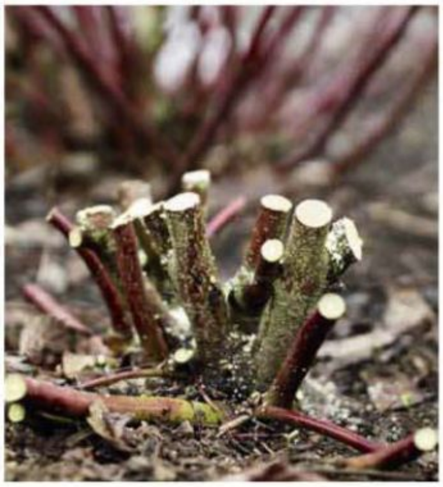
Hornbeam
Carpinus betulus was once one of the most commonly coppiced trees, its dense wood prized as fuel. Coppiced for garden use, the hornbeam would offer a dense foliage backdrop or screen, as when used for hedging.

Birch
Betula species also produces spring catkins and delicate new foliage – coppicing encourages the much prized multi-stemmed growth that makes for a beautiful winter bark display.



3 NEXT WINTER
After a summer of growth, the dogwood has worked hard to generate lots of dense new stems in rich red.

1 SUMMER: BUSHY GROWTH
This established dogwood, *Cornus alba* 'Sibirica', hasn't been cut back for a couple of seasons and is now about 1.5m tall and wide. Coppicing in winter will keep the stems compact and colourful.



2 LATE WINTER: CUTBACK
The 'stool' should have a smooth, clean finish to encourage healthy new stem growth. Cut back to between 7cm and 10cm from the ground.

Colourful winter stems: dogwood

There is no doubt that dogwoods (*Cornus*) are an essential plant for the winter border, because the leafless stems tend to have such vibrant colouring. The effect of rich red, orange, yellow or bright green multiple stems in winter light is stunning, especially when planted in large groups by water.

Perhaps because this has become a planting trend in recent years, gardeners have become a little over-zealous in carrying out the annual prune to get those desirable stems. As a result, plants are often coppiced too early in their life span, with disappointing results.

PLANTING Dogwoods combine well in borders with the white winter stems of the ghost bramble (*Rubus cockburnianus* or *R. thibetanus*) for contrast, and also look good with emerging early spring bulbs.

CUTTING The trick for getting the best out of dogwoods is to let them establish for three to four years before you coppice for the first time. Then cut back hard every other year to get the stem effects.

Cut dogwoods back in early spring, before the plants have started into leaf. Much of the work can be carried out with a pair of good, sharp secateurs, because stems are relatively thin. But for thicker stems, always use a small, sharp pruning saw, as long-handled loppers can squash the ends of the cut and bruise the stems, which ultimately leads to die-back and rotting.

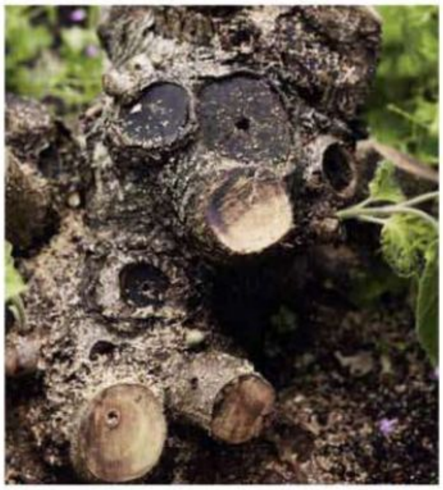
With dogwoods, leave the stool a little taller than for larger trees – up to around 7-10cm. This encourages a better shape for the new growth. Mulch generously after cutting. ▷

ALTERNATIVES

Other dogwoods
The new stems of *Cornus alba* 'Kesselringii' are a much richer, dark maroon red than 'Sibirica', and this cultivar is also slower-growing. The acid green new stems of *C. sericea* 'Flaviramea' look dazzling in the watery light of a clear spring day.

Willow
Coppiced willows such as *Salix alba* var. *vitellina* 'Britzensis' also produce beautiful coloured young stems which make a fantastic winter display.

1 SPRING: AFTER FLOWERING
Before cutting, this *Paulownia kawakamii* is 3m wide and 4m high. Previous coppicing has increased the size of the leaves, encouraging the branches to grow outwards, in search of light.



2 THE CUTBACK
The final stage of coppicing looks brutal, but it's vital to leave a clean, smooth surface. Damaged wood makes it easier for disease and rot to creep into the stool.

3 SUMMER: OUTSIZED FOLIAGE
After one season, the new growth is abundant. Individual leaves are huge, some as much as 24cm in diameter.

▷ Big leaves: foxglove tree

Paulownias – including *P. tomentosa*, *P. fortunei* and *P. kawakamii* – are fast growers that can reach up to 26m if left unpruned. They are impressive, beautiful trees with scented flowers in late spring, and in their native China they are prized for their wood. In western gardens, they are often coppiced to encourage the giant leaves that go with the post-pruning growth spurt.

PLANTING *Paulownia* makes an exotic impact in a border, as a backdrop to delicate summer perennials or combined with other bold foliage plants for a dramatic effect.

CUTTING While coppicing is generally best when plants are dormant, paulownias can be left until late in the spring – even May, after flowering. If you plan to coppice a mature tree, check it doesn't have a tree preservation order, and ask an approved arboriculturist to do the initial pruning.

Tackle the pruning in stages, first removing outer branches with a small pruning saw to get access to the main stems. Cut larger stems using a jump cut to remove cleanly. A jump cut is actually three cuts. With the first two – upwards halfway from beneath, then downwards – remove the bulk of the stem, except for a short stub; the third cut removes this remaining stub.

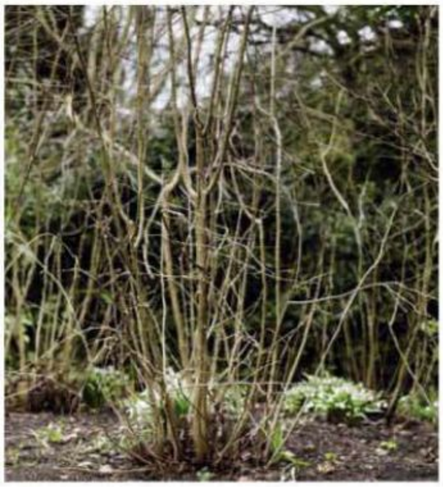
Work your way down to the base of the plant, leaving a clean, smooth stool no more than 10cm above the ground. Mulch straight after coppicing and use a liquid foliar feed through the first growing season. By season's end it will have produced a lush set of new leaves. The coppiced *Paulownia* grows as broad as it is tall, so allow 3-4m for expansion after the first cutting.

ALTERNATIVES

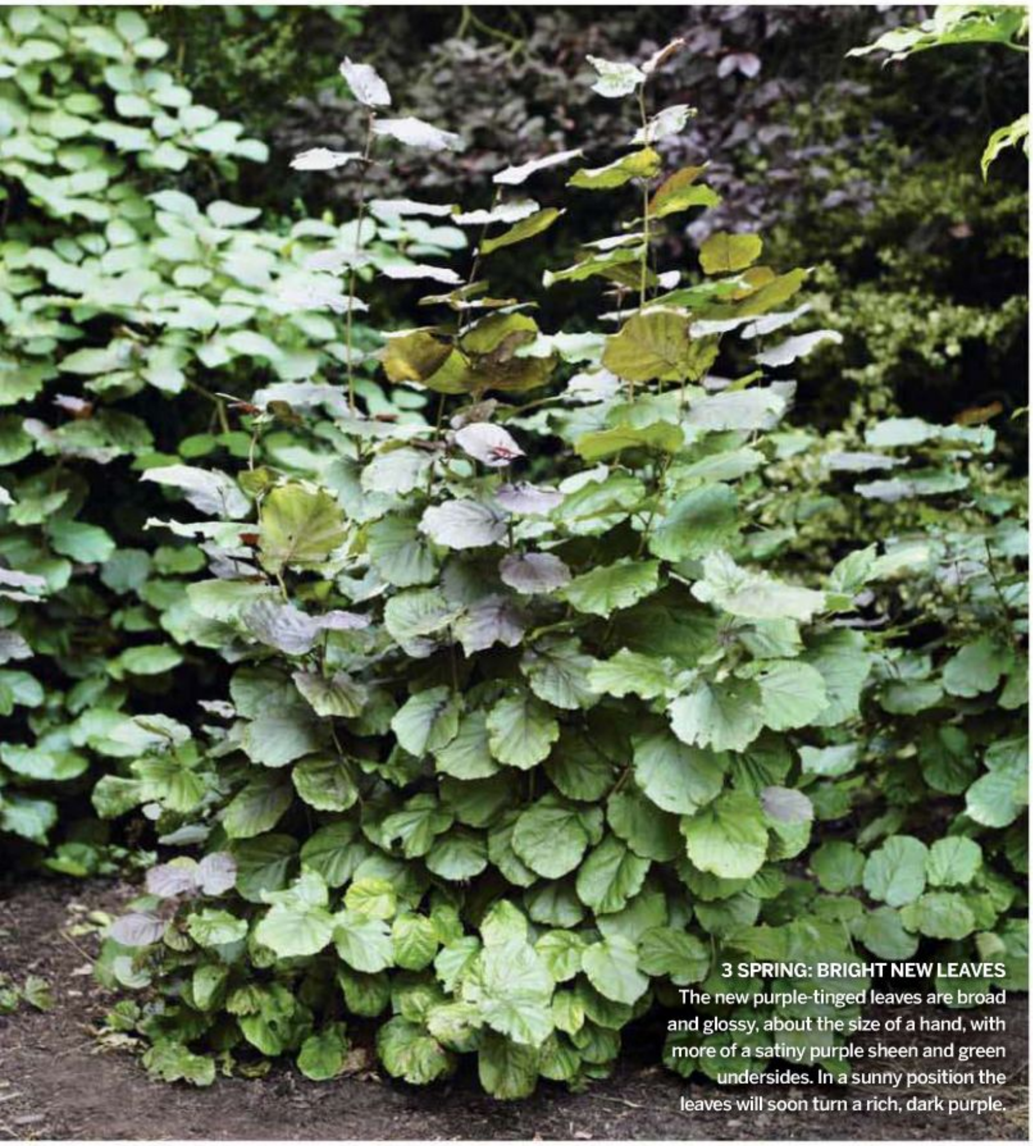
White mulberry
Morus alba is valued for its foliage and its fruit. In China it is traditionally coppiced so that it produces the large, fleshy leaves that are the preferred diet of the silk worm.

Small-leaved lime tree
Tilia cordata will produce bigger, heart-shaped leaves after coppicing and some nurseries will supply ready-coppiced specimens.

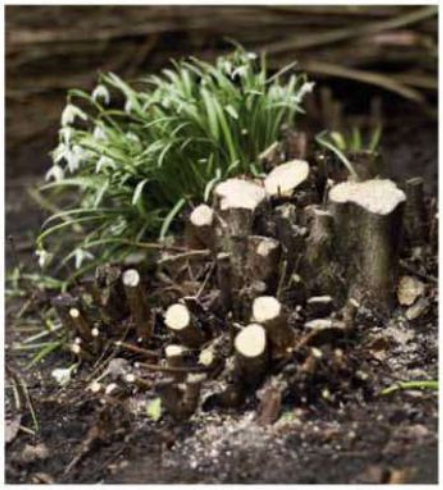
Indian bean tree
A coppiced *Catalpa bignonioides* will produce bold leaves similar to the *Paulownia*, but not quite so huge.



1 LATE WINTER
Before coppicing, the delicate young stems are just starting to show their leaf buds. These plants look lovely with winter-flowering bulbs such as snowdrops growing beneath them.



3 SPRING: BRIGHT NEW LEAVES
The new purple-tinged leaves are broad and glossy, about the size of a hand, with more of a satiny purple sheen and green undersides. In a sunny position the leaves will soon turn a rich, dark purple.



2 THE CUTBACK
Coppice on a three to five-year cycle to give the plant some rest time. A lot of energy goes into producing young growth, so you might find the plant gets weaker if you coppice annually.

Unusual foliage: purple-leaved hazel

Corylus maxima 'Purpurea' is not as vigorous as ordinary hazel, and doesn't produce the same sturdy stems as its relative, but the rich purple leaves are larger, glossier and more intense once coppiced. This means that it can be fully exploited for its ornamental impact to bring a dramatic effect to summer planting combinations.

PLANTING Coppiced specimens work well in small groups – five young plants in a 3m square area creates a dark, brooding, burgundy grouping. Plant with other purple-leaved planting such as smoke bush (*Cotinus coggygria* Purpureus Group) and you can make subtle textural combinations. Use as a backdrop to hot-coloured perennials in a herbaceous border.

The winter silhouette of the purple hazel is quite low-key, but underplanting with spring bulbs will add year-round interest. Snowdrops are a perfect foil for the delicate, bare, young winter stems, just starting to produce buds.

CUTTING Cut back when dormant, in late winter or early spring, well before it has come into leaf. Remove all small, twiggy stems with a pair of sharp secateurs and use a sharp saw to cut the larger stems. Cut right back to the base, leaving a clean-cut stool, no more than 5cm. Sprinkle some blood, fish and bone fertiliser, mulch generously after coppicing and continue to use a liquid foliar feed when the new leaves appear, and through the summer.

Water during dry spells and, in rural areas, protect recently coppiced trees from deer, which view the tender new growth as a treat. ◻

ALTERNATIVES

Eucalyptus
Gum trees such as *Eucalyptus glaucescens* are fast-growing and are often allowed to get out of proportion in gardens, but can be managed effectively as coppiced specimens. The added bonus is that the juvenile foliage is smaller, rounder and paler than the mature, finger-like leaves; these are the sprays often used by florists.

Holly
Coppice a mature holly (*Ilex aquifolium*) and it will produce extra-prickly young foliage which is much more dense and attractive and also makes an effective barrier plant.

Judas tree
Coppicing *Cercis siliquastrum* will result in large, lustrous, heart-shaped leaves.

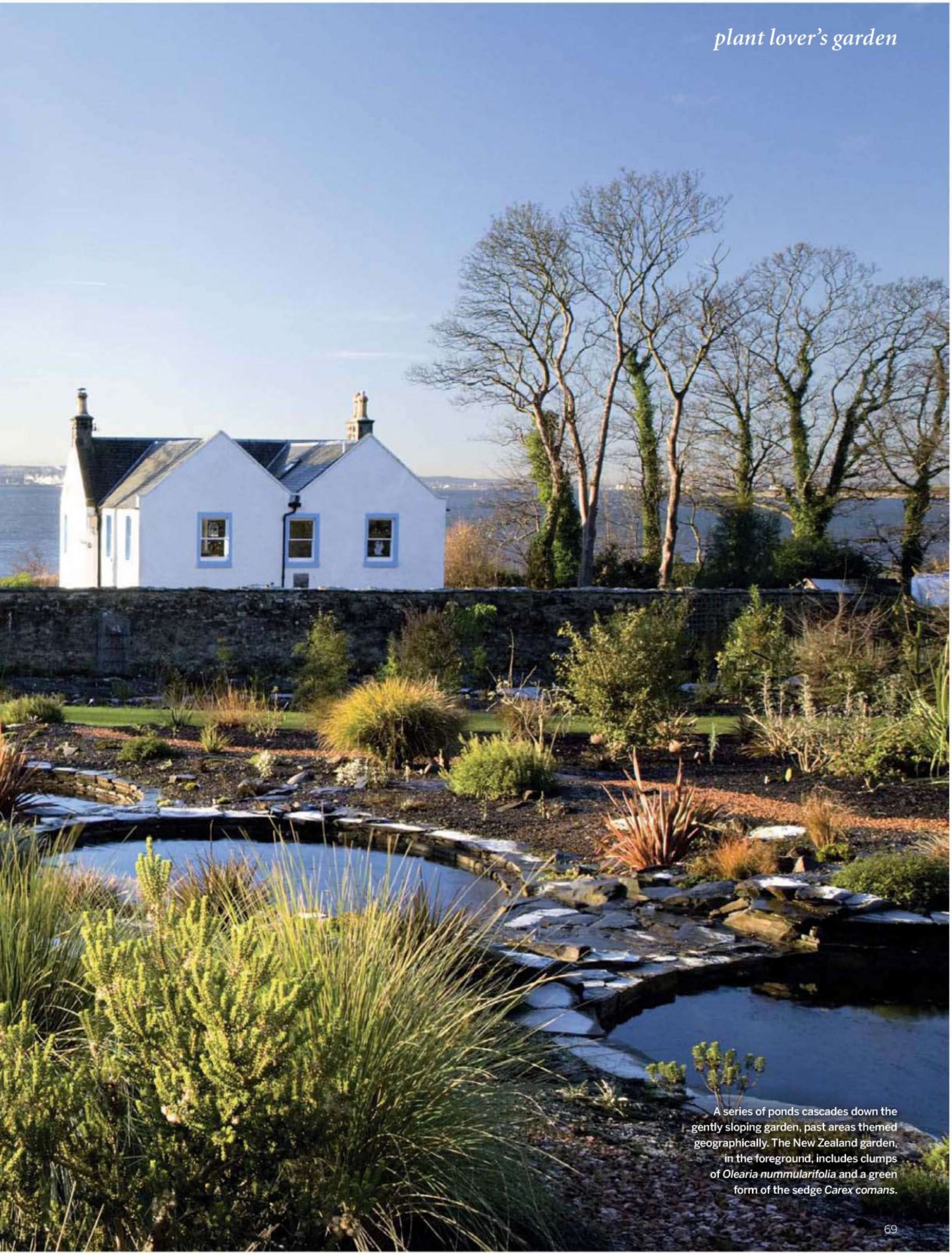
IN BRIEF

NAME **Southern Hemisphere Botanics.**
WHAT **A walled garden and woodlands, surrounding 18th-century gardener's cottage.**
WHERE **Firth of Forth, 20 miles northeast of Edinburgh.**
SIZE **A ¾-acre walled garden within three acres of land.**
CONDITIONS **Set on a south-facing slope, where frosts are usually mild but winds strong.**
SOIL **Neutral, clay, rich in parts from years spent as a vegetable garden.**
FEATURES **A garden of plant associations from the southern half of the globe.**

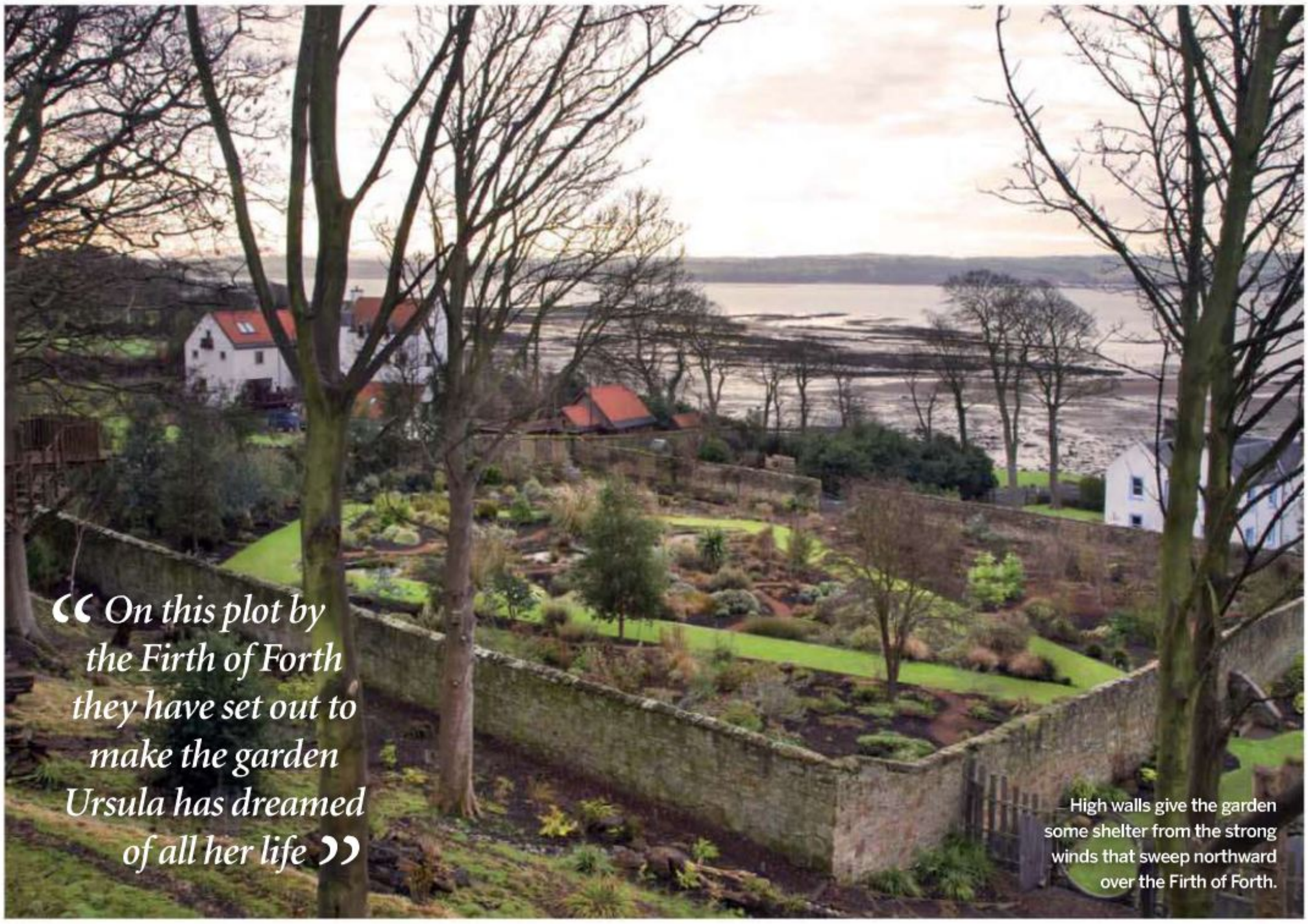
A defiant latitude

On the windswept shores of the Firth of Forth, two remarkable women have made an unlikely garden full of plants from the southern hemisphere

WORDS **LIA LEENDERTZ** PHOTOGRAPHS **RAY COX**



A series of ponds cascades down the gently sloping garden, past areas themed geographically. The New Zealand garden, in the foreground, includes clumps of *Olearia nummularifolia* and a green form of the sedge *Carex comans*.



> “On this plot by the Firth of Forth they have set out to make the garden Ursula has dreamed of all her life”

High walls give the garden some shelter from the strong winds that sweep northward over the Firth of Forth.

Ursula McHardy and her daughter Lorna are a force to be reckoned with. They speak quickly and passionately, Ursula with a strong Polish accent and Lorna with a faint German one, throwing botanical terms at each other, bickering and teasing, correcting each other mercilessly, demanding from each other the highest levels of scientific rigour. They are invigorating – if mildly terrifying – company.

But this is their world. On this plot by the Firth of Forth they have set out to make the garden Ursula has dreamed of all her life, a life spent as a botanist and nomad.

The idea for Southern Hemisphere Botanics was sown in the botanic gardens of Europe, the mountains of the Drakensberg and the plains of Patagonia. Ursula worked as scientific adviser on southern hemisphere plants at the Palmengarten Frankfurt, and travelled every winter to temperate areas of the southern hemisphere.

Essentially the ‘hook’ for this garden, as Lorna calls it, is to grow the plants of the southern hemisphere in ‘vegetation patterns’ rather than collections. So you won’t find a bank of different fuchsias, but you will find an approximation of a Valdivian monkey puzzle forest and a Patagonian southern beech forest. Here, in autumn, fiery foliaged *Embothrium coccineum* rubs shoulders with golden-flowered *Alstroemeria aurea* and dense, evergreen box-leaved barberry *Berberis microphylla*, all in the shelter of a dramatic stand of southern beech, *Nothofagus antarctica*.

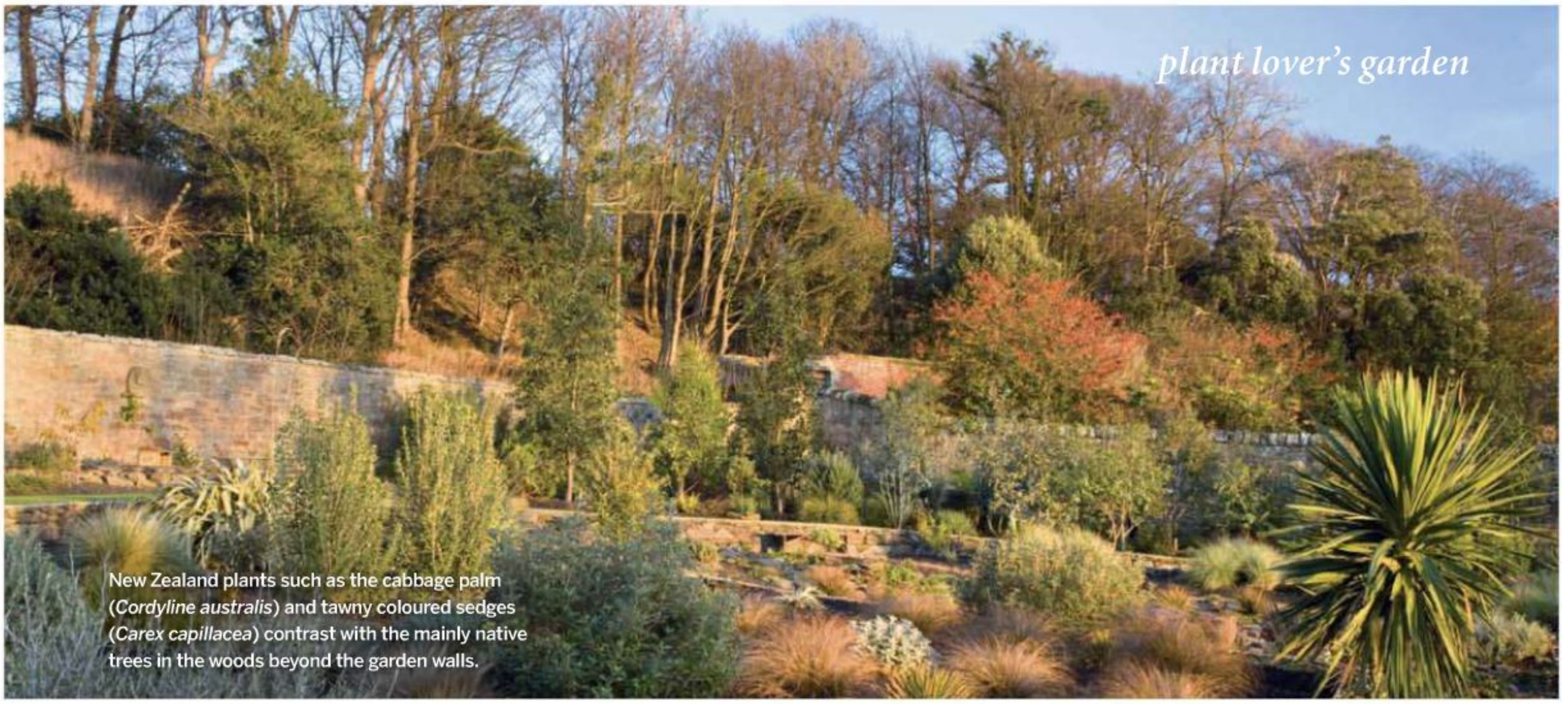
A world between walls

It is, to say the least, an unusual treatment of an old walled garden. The roughly square, south-sloping, ¾-acre walled garden was once part of an estate. It was used to grow vegetables for the family; later it supplied a school.

When Ursula and Lorna arrived six years ago it was laid mainly to grass with a few fruit trees and a stand of raspberries. They took almost everything out, put in a diamond-shaped path and a sequence of five large, perfectly circular ponds down the centre, and started planting. The garden itself, with its sheltering walls and slope, makes the most of the often weak rays of the Scottish sun. The position, too – just yards from the frost-mitigating effects of such a large body of water – could have been designed for Ursula’s plants, many of which are borderline hardy.

Ursula takes a scientific approach to the maintenance of the plants. She doesn’t protect any over winter. “I want to test how they perform in our conditions,” she says, “so what would be the point?” They lost many last winter, including most of her *Dicksonia* tree ferns and almost the entire Chatham Islands section, but for now they have chalked it up as an exceptional year and replanted. It’s not something Ursula would repeat. “If it became obvious that we couldn’t keep dicksonias without protecting them, I wouldn’t grow them. I want to select plants that are garden-worthy. I can tell you which southern hemisphere plants are bomb-proof.” Among those plants she may now count as hardy are two tree ferns, *Cyathea smithii* and her toughest *Dicksonia*, *D. squarrosa*.

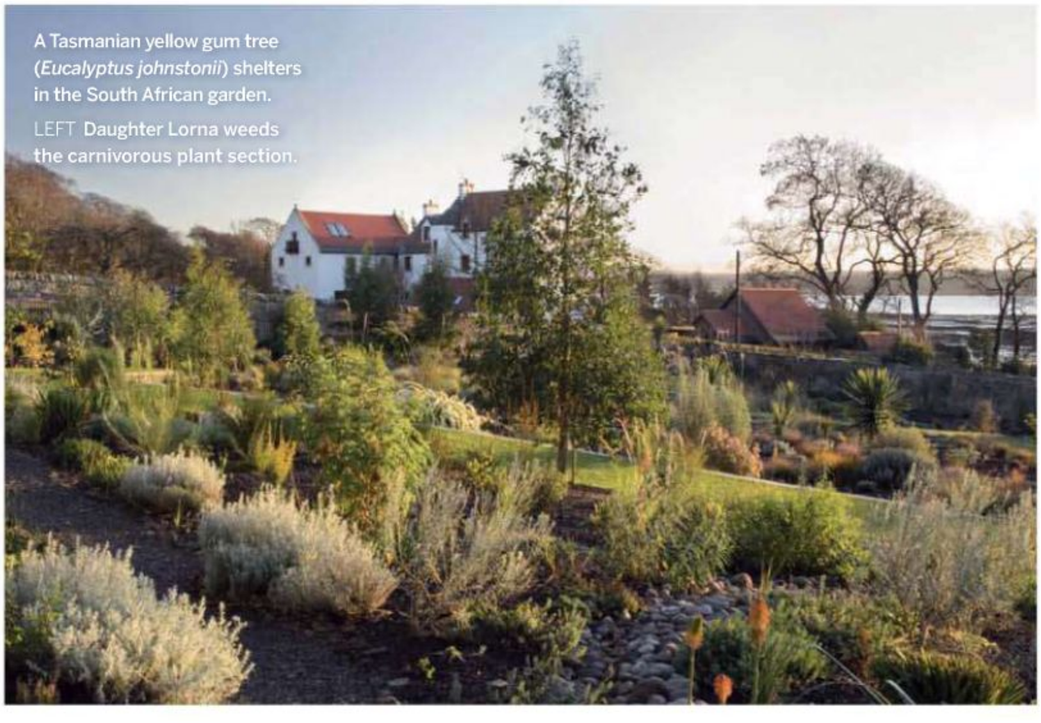
Many of the plants in the garden are evergreens, and it is the foliage of daisy bush (*Olearia*), *Brachyglottis* and *Eucalyptus* that provides the main interest here in winter, as well as the flower heads of the New Zealand grasses and the last gasps of the *Schizostylis* and *Osteospermum* of the South African areas. Berries play a large part too, particularly in the Tasmanian beds. As Ursula says, “Tasmanian flowers are pollinated by ▷



New Zealand plants such as the cabbage palm (*Cordyline australis*) and tawny coloured sedges (*Carex capillacea*) contrast with the mainly native trees in the woods beyond the garden walls.

The long, strappy leaves of *Phormium cookianum* 'Yellow Wave' look vibrant all winter. RIGHT Having travelled the world in search of plants, Ursula McHardy has now surrounded herself with her favourite species in her walled garden.

LORNA MCHARDY



A Tasmanian yellow gum tree (*Eucalyptus johnstonii*) shelters in the South African garden.

LEFT Daughter Lorna weeds the carnivorous plant section.

Snow gums grow in the "subalpine Eucalypt forest" in the shade beneath the wall, while native sycamores dominate the skyline.

▷ scent-seeking insects, so the flowers are white. The island has lots of birds, though, so the berries are spectacular." *Dianella tasmanica* is one of the best, with vibrant, deep blue berries that Ursula likens to lapis lazuli.

The garden may be blessed with relatively gentle frosts, but it is cursed by wind, which rushes across the Firth and reaches gale force several times each year. This makes the Australian sub-alpine eucalypt forest area a little tricky. "Australian soils are old and leached of nutrients," says Ursula, "which means eucalypt roots have to search deep. In the UK soils are richer, so eucalypts root across the surface, grow huge, and get blown over." Although she "impoverished" the soil before planting by adding huge amounts of grit, she takes care with her selections, and thinks the smaller, multi-stemmed snow gums such as *Eucalyptus pauciflora* subsp. *debeuzevillei* and *E. gunnii* are a better choice for British gardens. These forest areas are among the most successful in the garden, which perhaps reflects the fact that these are the areas Ursula most loves in the wild. "The old forests have a peace about them."

There is nothing obvious or straightforward about this garden. It is a series of small, wild landscapes planted in the cosy setting of a walled garden. The thread of botanical endeavour produces restful, natural associations and as a visitor you cannot help but leave better informed than you enter.

Ursula is an eccentric, well-travelled and fiercely intelligent woman, and Southern Hemisphere Botanics – the distillation of her life's work – is the perfect self-portrait. Both Ursula and her garden force you to be on your mettle. You step up, or you miss out. ☐

USEFUL INFORMATION

ADDRESS Southern Hemisphere Botanics
The Gardeners' Cottage, Shore Road,
Crombie Point, Fife KY12 8LQ.
TEL 07786 404198. [No website.]
OPEN Easter to October, Sundays, Mondays and Tuesdays, 10am-4pm, or by appointment.
PARKING There is no access by car. Park at Torryburn and walk along the Shore Road, a 15-minute walk. Arrangements may be made in advance if you are unable to walk.

Nine December plants

Lorna McHardy describes some of her favourites for early winter

1 *Eucalyptus pauciflora* subsp. *debeuzevillei*
Like all eucalyptus, we plant this snow gum for its bark. Mature specimens have white stems.

2 *Osteospermum jucundum*
The African daisy is very floriferous and blooms for a long time if dead-headed.

3 *Callistemon salignus*
I love callistemons, from Australia, so we are trying any available ones to see which are hardy.

4 *Libertia ixioides*
This New Zealand species has insignificant white flowers but lots of berries, from yellow to orange, which last all winter.

5 *Gaultheria mucronata*
This Chilean plant is particularly beautiful in winter. The berries' colour is incredibly vivid.

6 *Kniphofia triangularis*
This South African species produces large, spectacular, crowd-stopping flowers between October and December.

7 *Polygala myrtifolia*
This shrub from southeastern Africa is bigger than the European herbaceous polygalas and flowers for months.

8 *Phormium cookianum* 'Flamingo'
New Zealand mountain flax stands almost any weather, and this cultivar is particularly decorative because of the pinkish stripes.

9 *Schizostylis coccinea* 'Major'
Another late-blooming crowd-stopper, this plant from southern Africa spreads well.

Where to buy

Two renowned suppliers of plants that originate in the southern hemisphere

Binny Plants
Binny Estate, Ecclesmachan, West Lothian
EH52 6NL. Tel 01506 858931,
www.binnyplants.com

Hillview Hardy Plants
Worfield, near Bridgnorth, Shropshire
WV15 5NT. Tel 01746 716454,
www.hillviewhardyplants.com

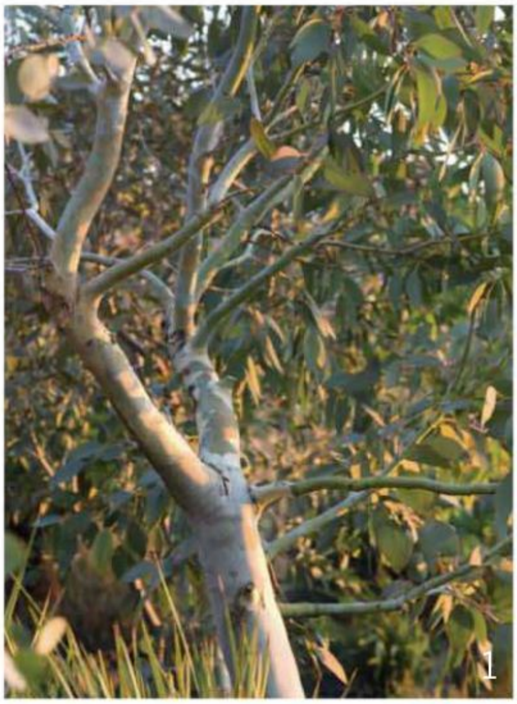
Other gardens to visit in the area

Glendoick Gardens
This garden, about an hour away by road from the McHardys, is famous for its collection of rhododendrons, many of which are also on sale in the nursery.
Glencarse, Perth PH2 7NS. Tel 01738 860260.
www.glendoick.com

Culross Palace Garden
A couple of miles west along the Firth of Forth lies this restored 17th-century merchant's house with authentic vegetable gardens.
Culross, Fife KY12 8JH.
Tel 0844 4932189,
www.nts.org.uk

Explorers Garden
Ninety minutes' drive away, this garden celebrates plants brought to the UK by Scottish planthunters.
Port-Na-Craig, Perthshire PH16 5DR.
Tel 01796 484600,
www.explorersgarden.com

GLENDOICK GARDENS FOTOFLORA / ALAMY. CULROSS PALACE GARDEN DAVID LYONS / ALAMY. EXPLORERS GARDEN SHANA YOUNG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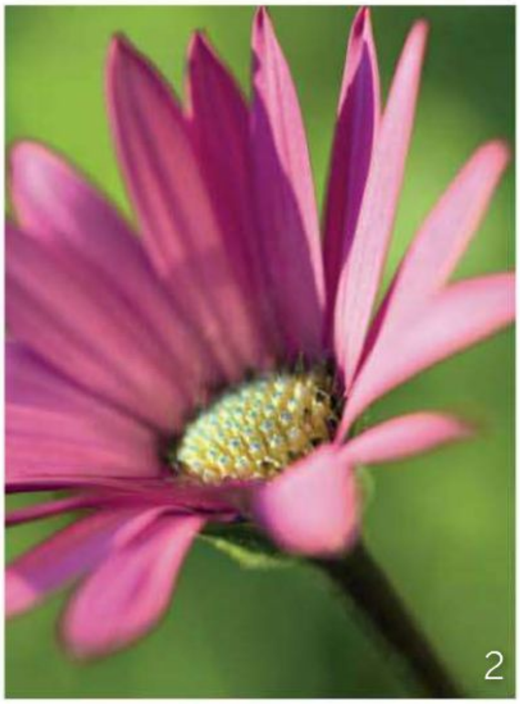
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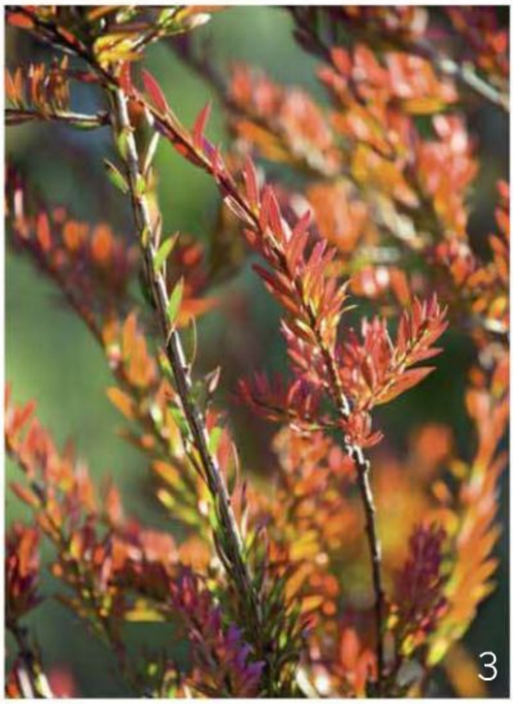
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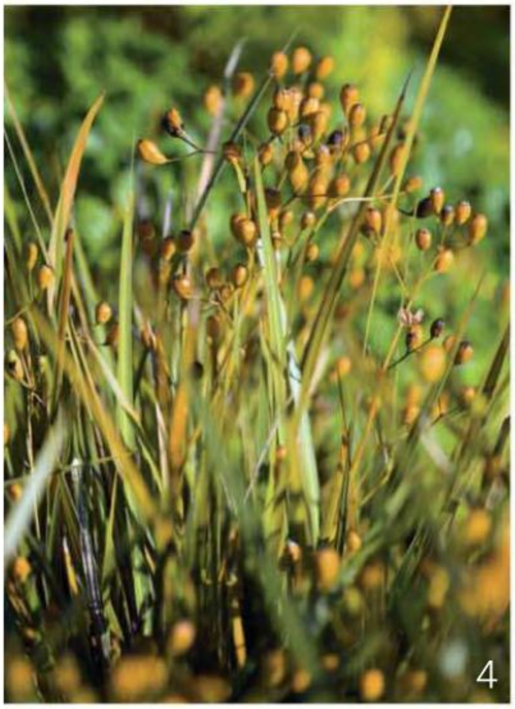
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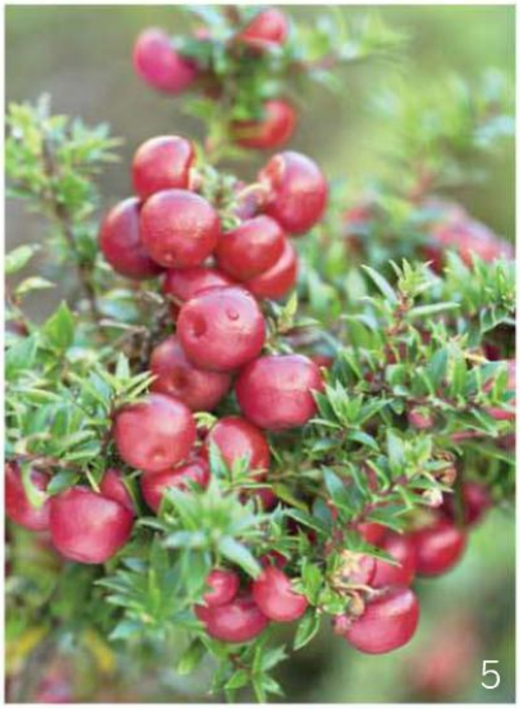
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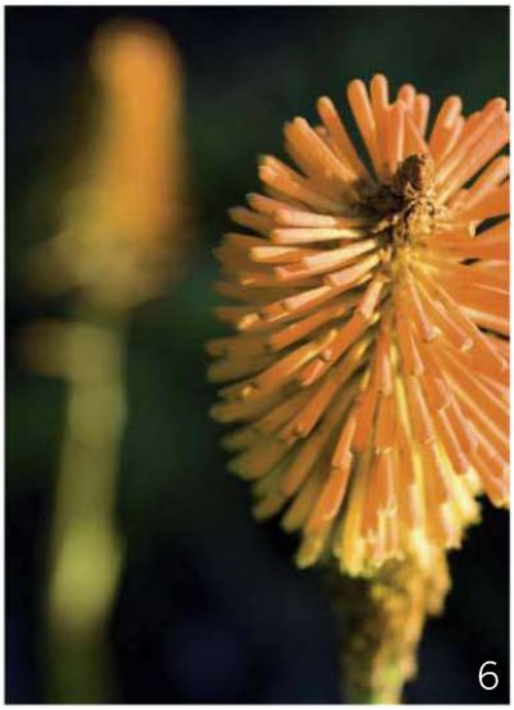
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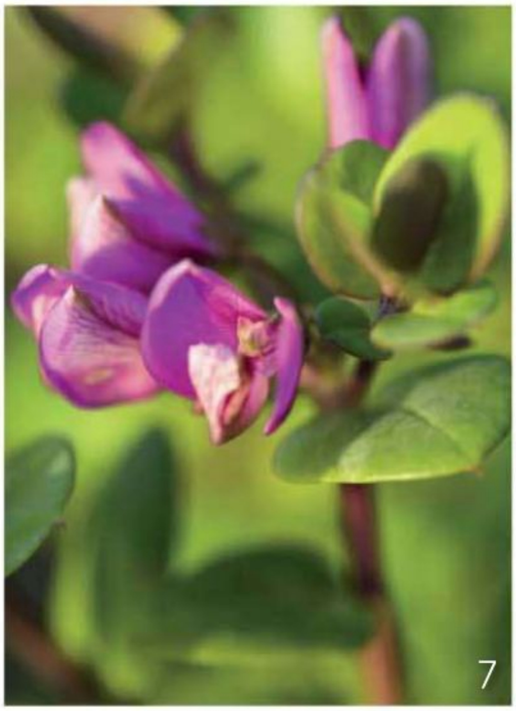
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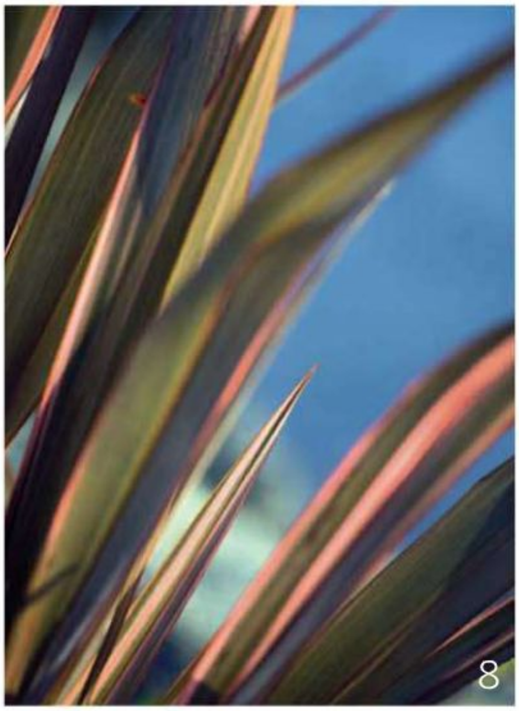
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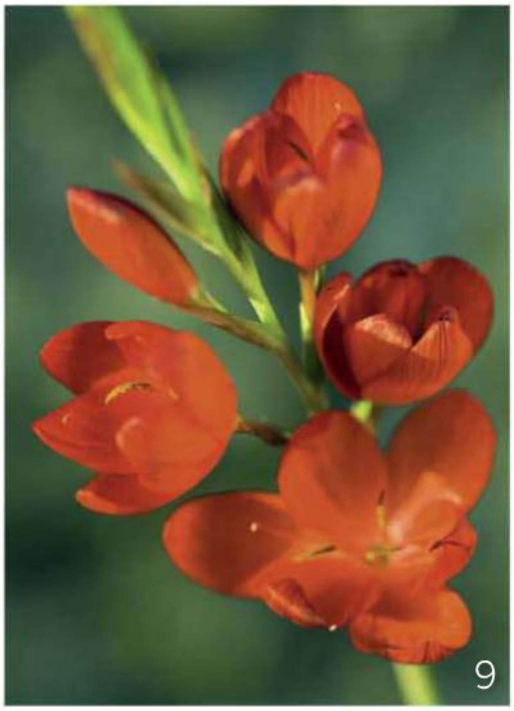
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Garden of the Year 2010

What is the most remarkable garden you've seen in 2010? GARDENS ILLUSTRATED's editor Juliet Roberts and Christopher Woodward, director of the Garden Museum in London, get together with movers and shakers in the garden world to find out what has most impressed them this year

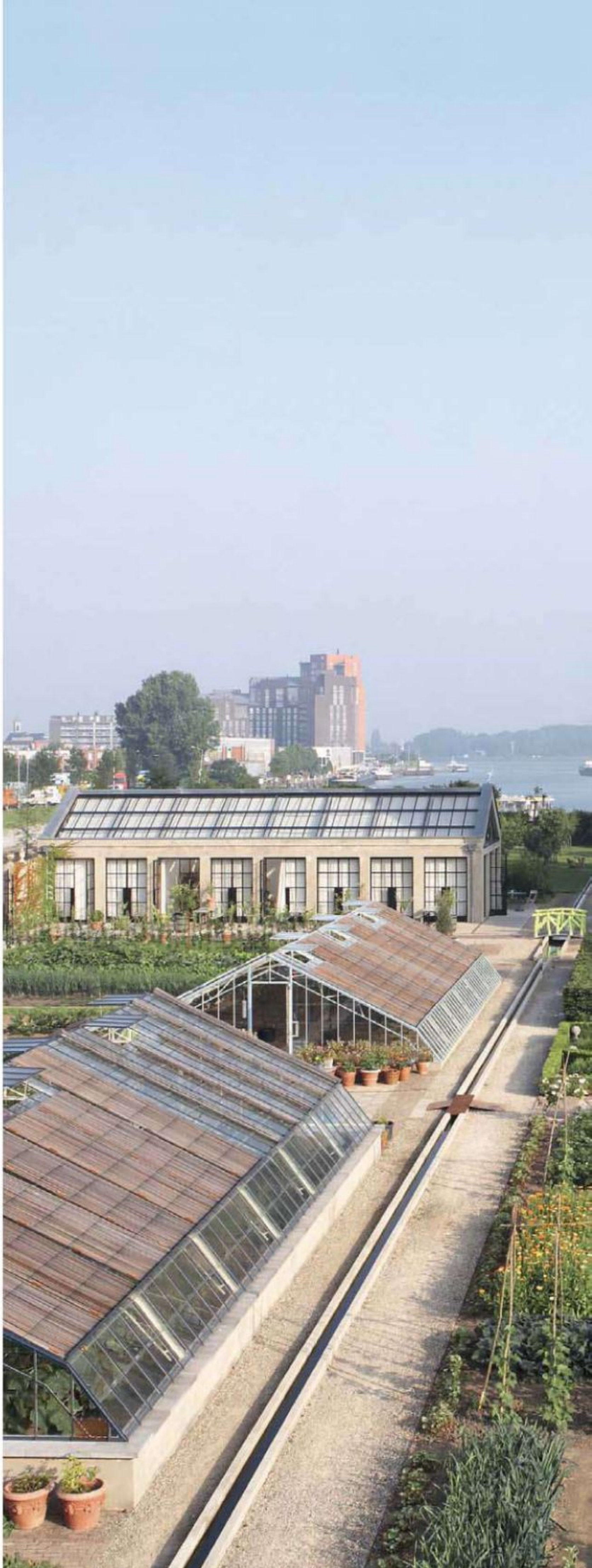
WINNER

Villa Augustus

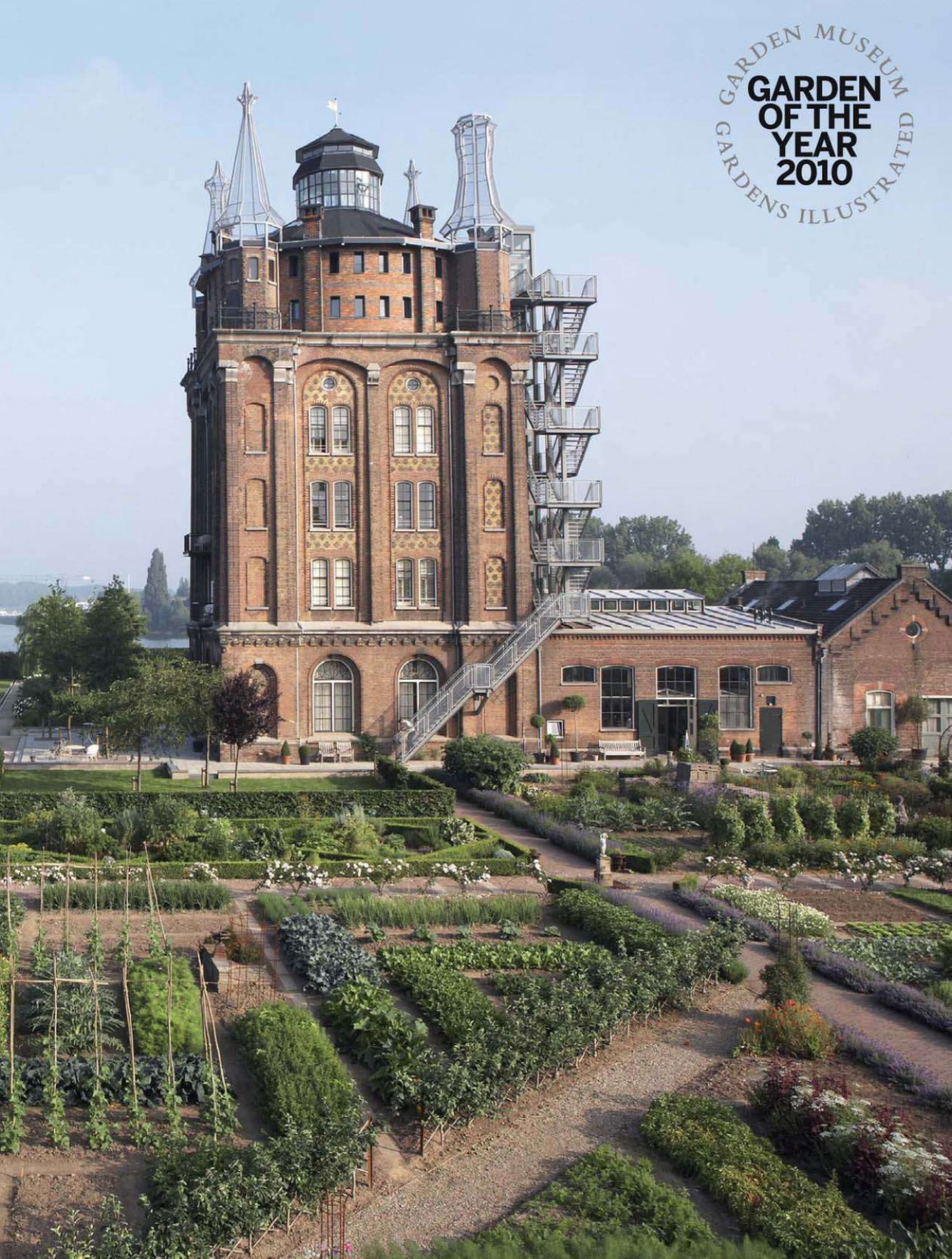
NOMINATED BY JULIET ROBERTS
EDITOR, GARDENS ILLUSTRATED

Regular readers will know that I'm a keen veg grower, so when I first heard about the contemporary organic veg plot at Villa Augustus in the Netherlands I was eager to see it. I was not disappointed; it's undoubtedly one of the most stylish, innovative and dynamic fruit and veg gardens I've come across. Importantly, Villa Augustus is a labour of love run by three friends who took on the derelict property with the aim of making the garden the hub of their business. As co-owner Daan van der Have explains: "when a garden is well done it's a statement of care and when people see personal care, it has a profound effect on them." Today the garden supplies fruit, vegetables and cut flowers for Villa Augustus' restaurant, café, shop and hotel (a beautifully converted water tower). This project has breathed new life into an industrial building and, importantly, the local community. Villa Augustus also stands out because of its integrity of purpose: it celebrates the great pleasures of growing and eating fresh seasonal produce, of bringing people together, and the restorative powers of beautiful gardens made with passion.

OPEN Daily. TEL+31(0)78 6393111 WEBSITE www.villa-augustus.nl



WALTER HERFST



GARDEN MUSEUM
GARDEN OF THE YEAR 2010
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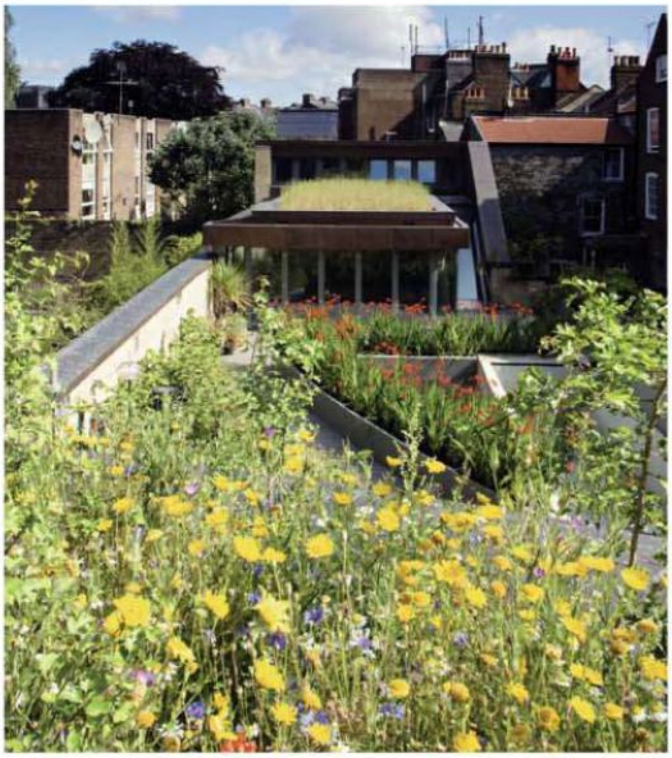


JEFFERSON SMITH

Muse House

NOMINATED BY CHRISTOPHER WOODWARD, CURATOR, THE GARDEN MUSEUM

In 2006 Justin Bere, a visionary architect, bought a cheap backyard plot in North London and slotted in his new home and design studio. Landscape architect Kim Wilkie designed a rooftop woodland: "I wanted to remind myself of growing up in Somerset," says Justin. "But I also wanted to build a local ecology." The design studio looks out on two tiny woods of hawthorn and hazel. Goldfinches flit through the leaves. On the roof, Dusty Gedge planted a meadow. There's even a beehive.

At school Justin was a gardener, and sketched futuristic grass-roofed eco-structures. At Muse House he has dissolved the boundaries between house and garden – and between the city and the countryside. Millions of us want urban buzz *and* rural beauty. I want to live in London, but to wake up with wildflowers pressed against the glass, and go to bed with moonlight shining through woodland. Muse House is a glimpse of what city life could be.

OPEN For details of open days please email bere@bere.co.uk

> *"I wanted to remind myself of growing up in Somerset. But I also wanted to build a local ecology"* JUSTIN BERE

The Garden House

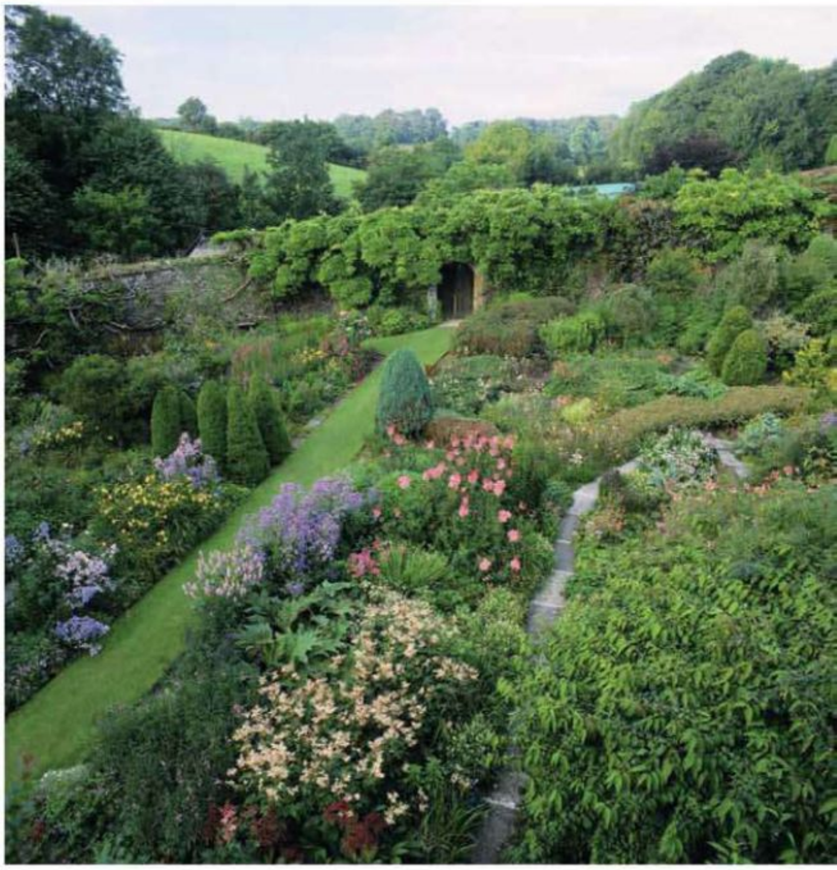
NOMINATED BY CAMILLA SWIFT, GARDEN WRITER

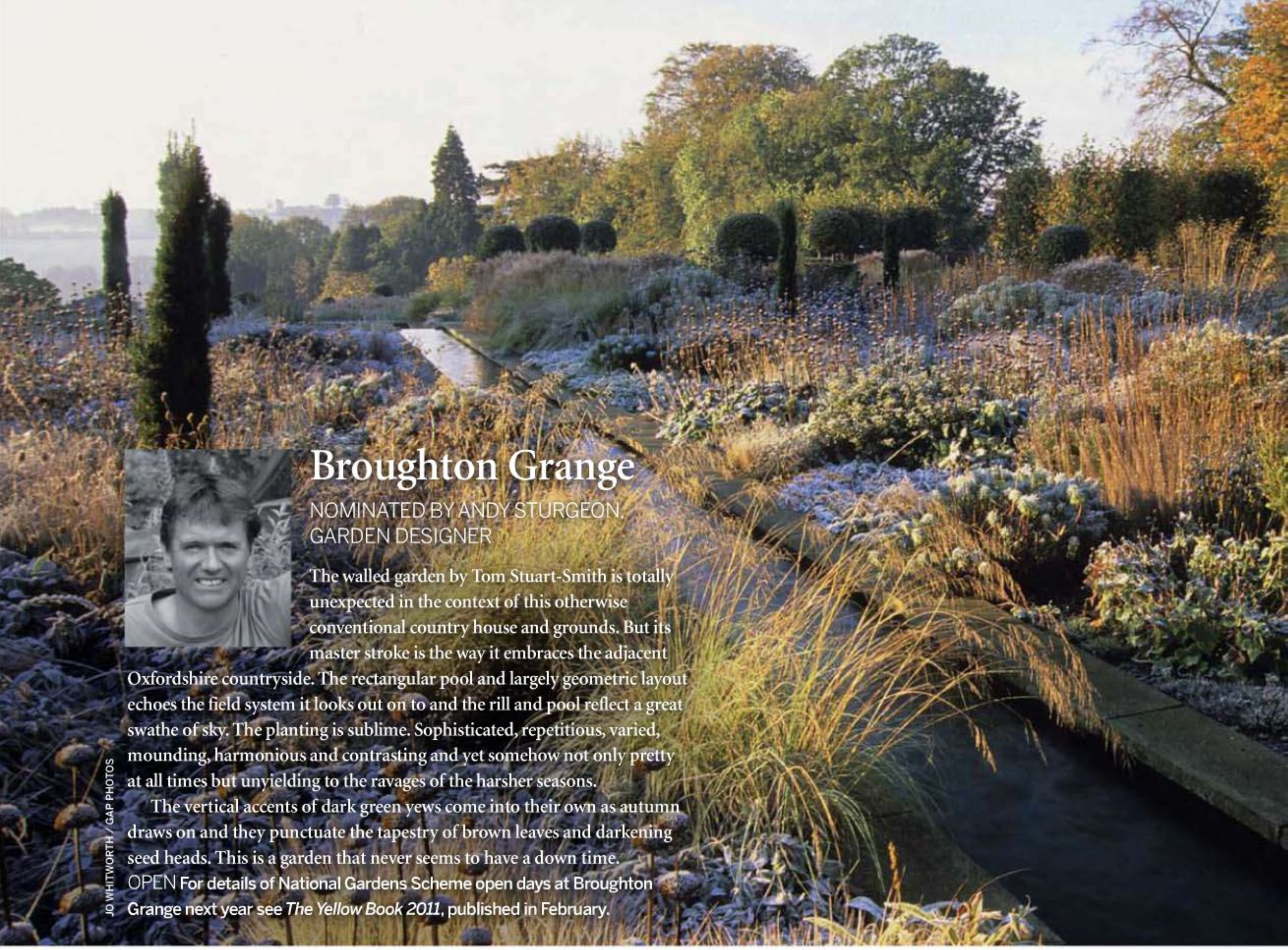
Set in eight acres of a peaceful valley near the village of Buckland Monachorum in Devon, this tranquil, romantic place is several gardens rolled into one. Exquisitely and richly planted, it is a garden for all seasons. Sweeping carpets of spring bulbs are followed in summer by the exuberantly naturalistic planting of the South African, cottage and quarry gardens, and the vivid autumn colours of the acer glade. In the walled garden generous borders provide year-round colour.

When Matt Bishop took over as head gardener from the visionary Keith Wiley seven years ago, he had some big gardening boots to fill. Undaunted, he has upheld The Garden House's tradition of having "only the best plants" in his exhilarating planting, and the garden continues to evolve and flourish. Next year it celebrates its golden jubilee, yet The Garden House remains a magical place where original and innovative gardening continues to inspire and delight .

OPEN February to October 2011 – contact garden for details.
TEL 01822 854769 WEBSITE www.thegardenhouse.org.uk

CLAY PERRY / PHOTOLIBRARY





JO WHITWORTH / GAP PHOTOS

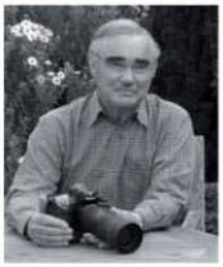
Broughton Grange

NOMINATED BY ANDY STURGEON, GARDEN DESIGNER

The walled garden by Tom Stuart-Smith is totally unexpected in the context of this otherwise conventional country house and grounds. But its master stroke is the way it embraces the adjacent Oxfordshire countryside. The rectangular pool and largely geometric layout echoes the field system it looks out on to and the rill and pool reflect a great swathe of sky. The planting is sublime. Sophisticated, repetitious, varied, mounding, harmonious and contrasting and yet somehow not only pretty at all times but unyielding to the ravages of the harsher seasons.

The vertical accents of dark green yews come into their own as autumn draws on and they punctuate the tapestry of brown leaves and darkening seed heads. This is a garden that never seems to have a down time.

OPEN **For details of National Gardens Scheme open days at Broughton Grange next year see *The Yellow Book 2011*, published in February.**

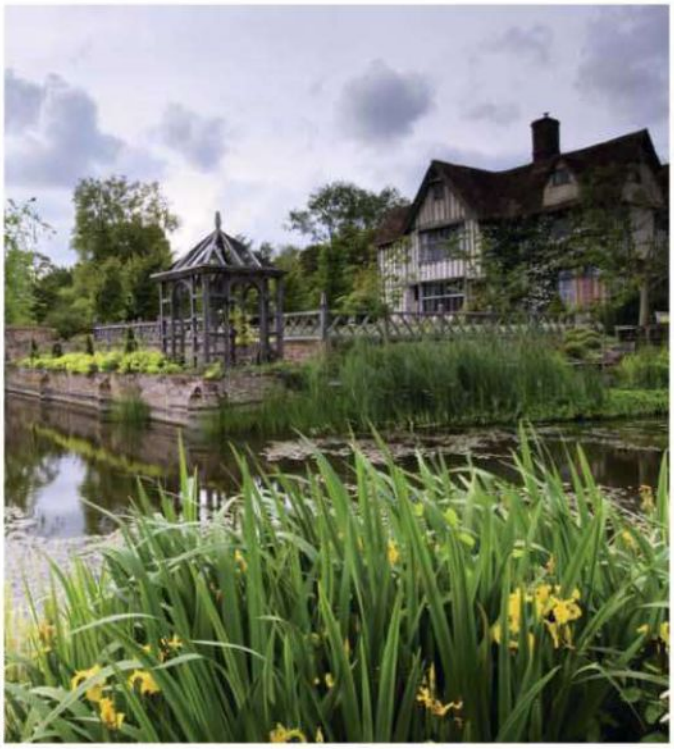


Gifford's Hall

NOMINATED BY JERRY HARPUR, GARDEN PHOTOGRAPHER

What do you think of this idea? To discover an extraordinary, moated Tudor house in the village of Wickhambrook, Suffolk, complete with a neglected six-acre garden set in 25 acres of meadowland, and then to renovate the house for four years before beginning work on the garden for 12. The delightful result is the achievement of Sir David and Lady Diana Rowland. Diana had previously shown little interest in gardening. Enthusiasm for Gifford's changed that. After a two-year course at the English Gardening School, she called in designer George Carter, who framed the lawn with low oak trellis and planted it simply with lavender. Around the house, the Rowlands have created a bold and simple structure of clipped trees and geometric paths. Further away, this gradually gives way to less formal and more experimental treatment. The quiet blending of Tudor shapes and structure with naturalistic planting actually enhances the peace surrounding Gifford's.

OPEN June 19, 2011, 2-5pm. EMAIL dianarowland@giffordshall.com



JERRY HARPUR

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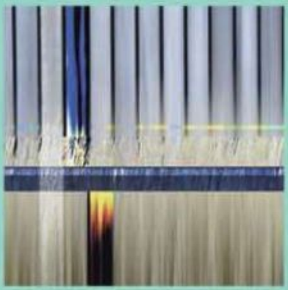

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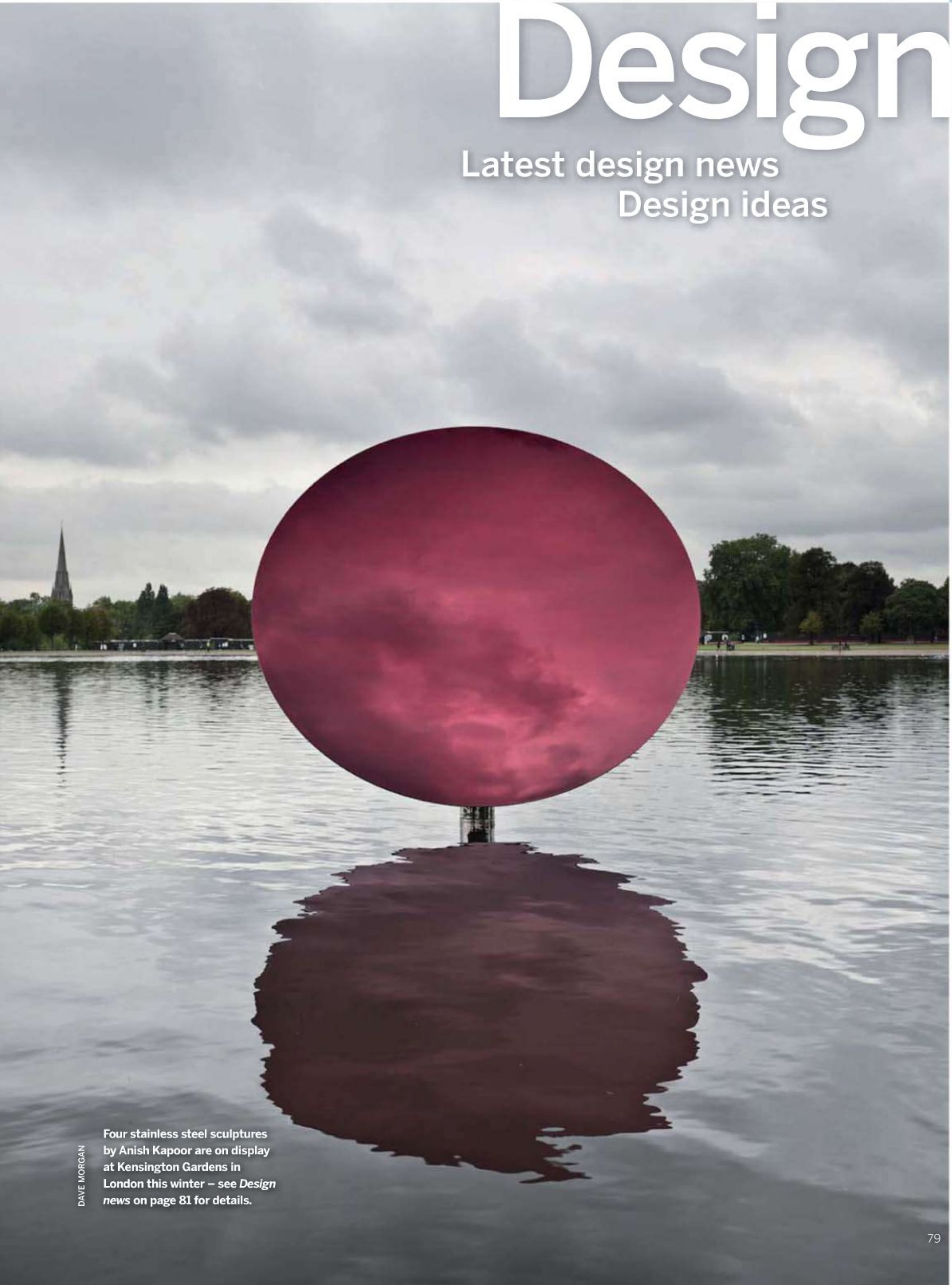

DAVE MORGAN

Four stainless steel sculptures by Anish Kapoor are on display at Kensington Gardens in London this winter – see *Design news* on page 81 for details.

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Winner of two RHS gold medals at Chelsea Flower Show

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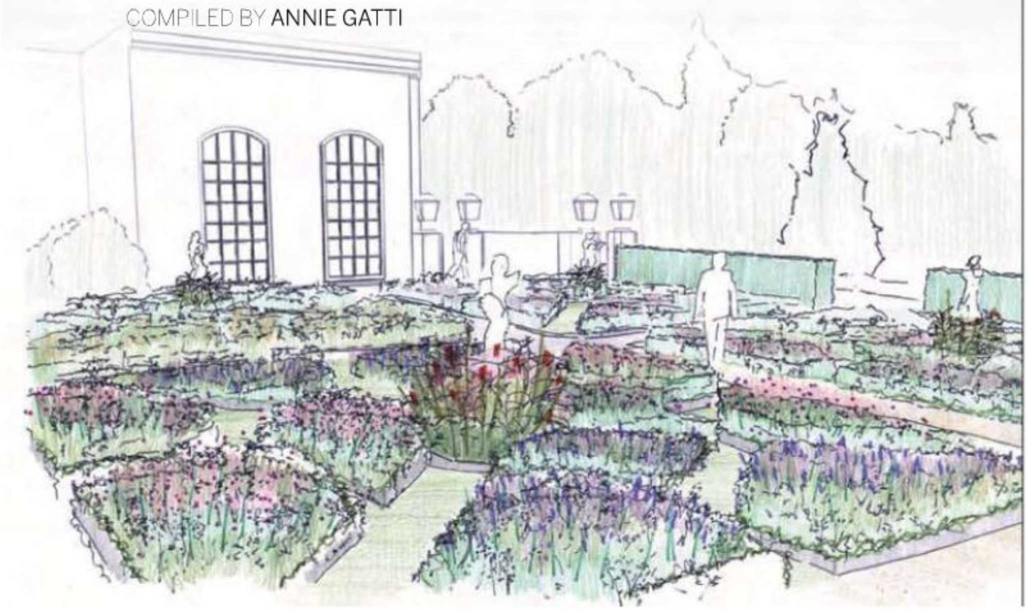
News

COMPILED BY **ANNIE GATTI**



WREST PARK in Bedfordshire has won a grant of £1.14m from the Heritage Lottery Fund, enabling restoration of the Italian and Rose Gardens to begin this winter. The grassed-over Rose Garden will be replanted in the style of the 19th century, and the parterre beds in the Italian Garden (left) will be filled with biennial carpet bedding. The restored gardens are due to be revealed in summer 2011.

DAVE MORGAN

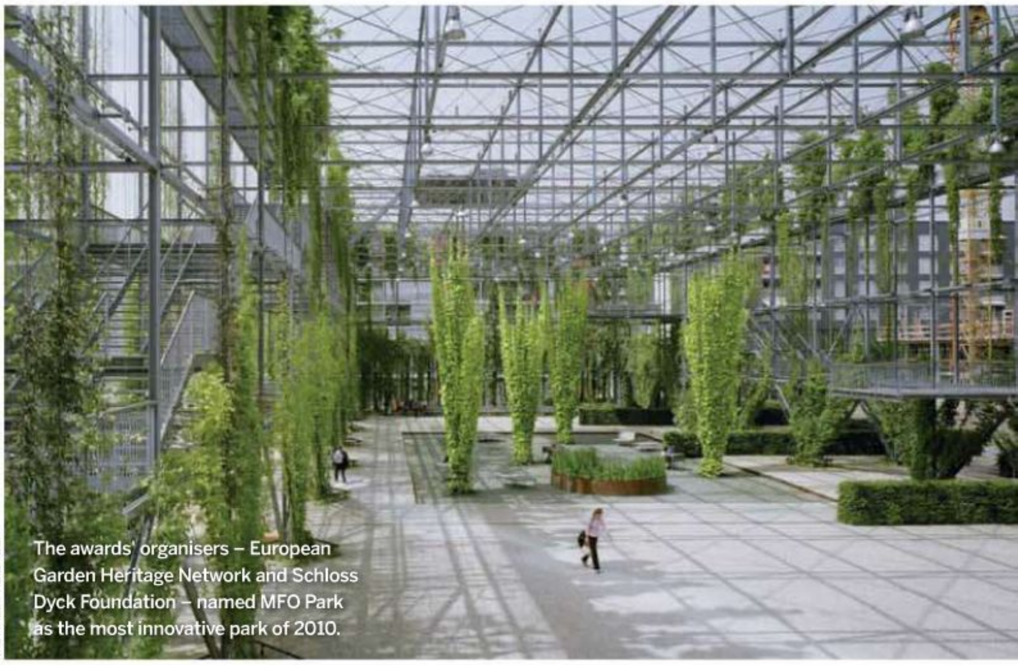
KAPOOR IN THE PARK

Visitors to Kensington Gardens in London will see the park in a new light this winter thanks to four sculptures by Anish Kapoor. The polished surfaces of the stainless steel sculptures reflect and distort the changing colours, foliage and weather of the surroundings. "They're about looking," says Kapoor. "They almost require you to participate in some way or other." *Turning the World Upside Down* continues until 13 March 2011. www.royalparks.org.uk

AWARDS

In the frame

MFO Park in Zürich, a latticework of steel poles supporting a range of differently textured climbing plants, has won a major design award. The structure, 17m high and 100m long, was named as the 2010 European Garden Awards' Most Innovative Contemporary Park or Garden. Designed by Burckhardt and Partners and Raderschall Landscape Architects, the 'park' makes full use of its vertical space with a series of balconies and platforms which allow users to explore different levels. Trentham Estate in Stoke-on-Trent won Best Development of a Historic Park or Garden. See www.imaginethegarden.co.uk for details.



MICHAEL FREISAGER

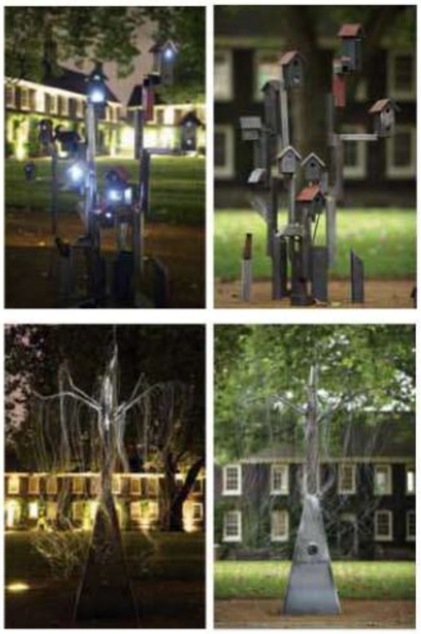
The awards' organisers – European Garden Heritage Network and Schloss Dyck Foundation – named MFO Park as the most innovative park of 2010.

It's sturdy, maintenance-free and you can leave it outside all year – Lancashire firm Kedel's new range of garden furniture is made in the UK from recycled plastic, and includes the chunky Nanpan chair (£249). Tel 01282 861325, www.kedel.co.uk

EVENTS

Show preview

Two international entries for next year's Chelsea Flower Show are among those to be accepted early by the RHS. For the first time the Royal Botanic Gardens in Melbourne is exhibiting, with a design by Jim Fogarty (above) that will feature many Australian plants never seen at Chelsea before. The theme is the journey of water from the arid outback to the wetter, urban east coast. Sarah Eberle, a veteran of show garden design, described her garden, for the Principality of Monaco, as "one of the most exciting, if not *the* most exciting, project I have ever been involved with". At time of going to press the details of the design were still to be finalised but the garden is said to reflect the landscape and architecture of Monaco. Other confirmed designers include Luciano Giubbilei for Laurent-Perrier, Patrick Collins and Laurie Chetwood for B&Q and Robert Myers for Cancer Research. To book tickets for the Chelsea Flower Show 2011, call 0844 3387505 or visit www.theticketfactory.com/rhs/online/



MATTHEW ANDREWS

SCULPTURE

Illuminating ideas

Sitting the Light Fantastic by costume and fashion designer Kei Ito is an innovative lighting installation that adds a magical night-time dimension to the front garden at the Geffrye Museum in London. Taking her cue from items in the museum's collection of furnishings from English homes, Japanese-born Ito has created a steel 'cherry tree', a cluster of bird houses and a parade of steel-framed chairs and lamps draped with a unique fibre-optic textile. All glow as darkness falls. The sculptures flank the central avenue of the newly refurbished garden, which has rolled gravel paths and reinstated York stone paving. Tel 020 7739 9893, www.geffrye-museum.org.uk

Notebook

• **Rosie Atkins** is stepping down as curator of the Chelsea Physic Garden after nine years. During her first year she launched a horticultural trainee scheme which has so far given 12 apprentice gardeners the chance to train at the world-famous garden. The founding editor of GARDENS ILLUSTRATED, Rosie will continue her work on the RHS Council and other charity work.

• **Showing promise** An exhibition of work by students of garden design at KLC School of Design takes place at the Clore Learning Centre, Hampton Court Palace, Surrey, on 14 December, 9.30am-6pm. To book, call 020 7376 3377 or email info@klc.co.uk.

• **The Garden Museum** in London is planning to become a hub for archives relating to garden design. The first main drawing collection includes the works of Sir Geoffrey Jellicoe, held by the Landscape Institute, and under threat from cost-cutting. New storage facilities included as part of the museum's refurbishment will house the collection.

• **Don Pritchard**, the new head gardener at Scone Palace in Perth, is to lead a five-year restoration project at the 100-acre gardens. Work has already started on the Victorian walled kitchen garden, whose peach house is to be returned to full production. www.scone-palace.co.uk.

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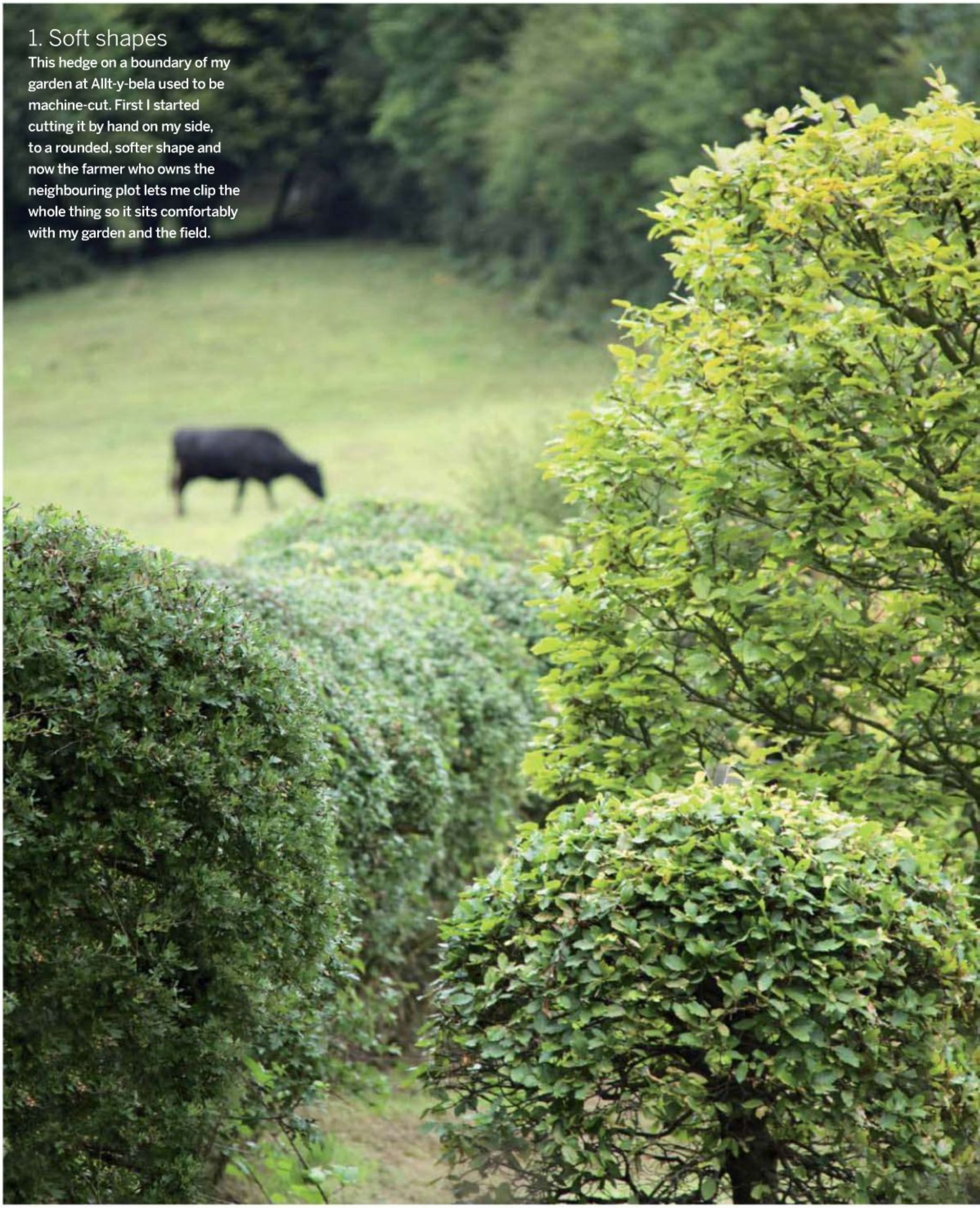
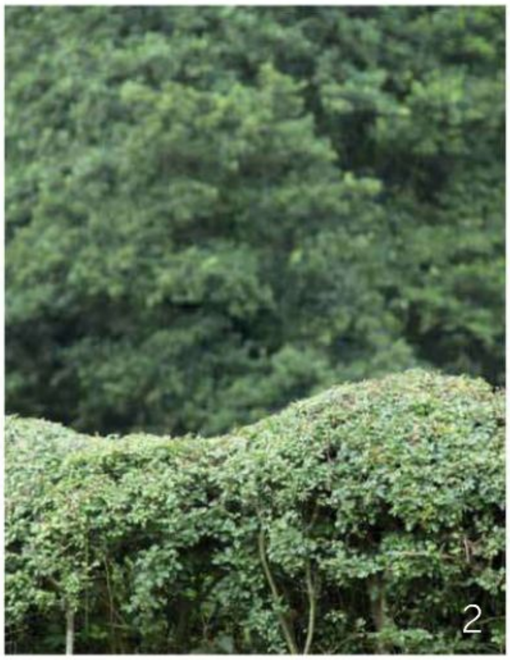


1. Soft shapes

This hedge on a boundary of my garden at Allt-y-bela used to be machine-cut. First I started cutting it by hand on my side, to a rounded, softer shape and now the farmer who owns the neighbouring plot lets me clip the whole thing so it sits comfortably with my garden and the field.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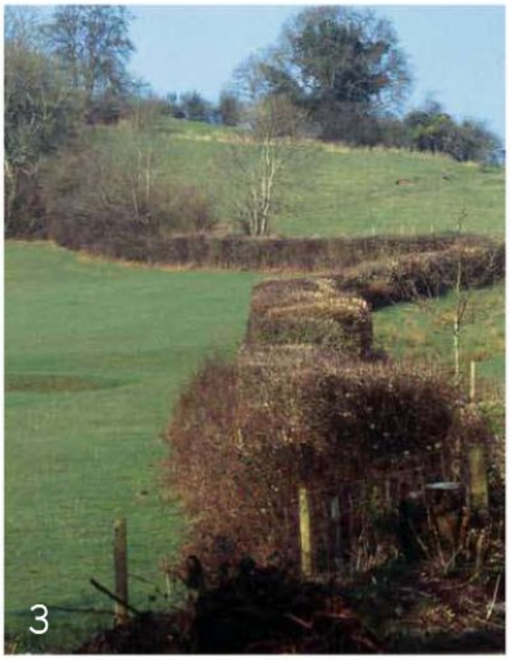
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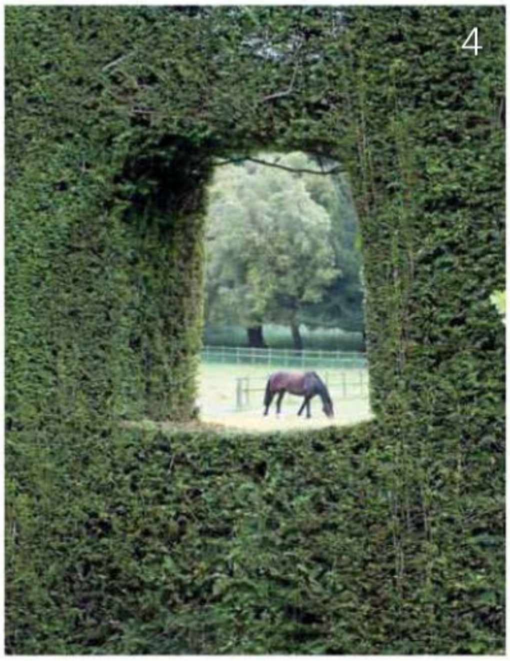
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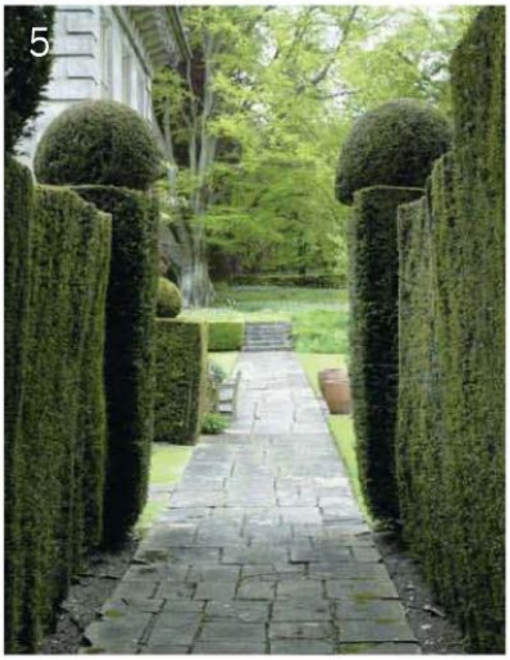
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2. A natural look

In rural settings, a deciduous hedge such as hawthorn looks most at home when clipped in a free and naturalistic way with dips and curves that suit its form and emphasise its dense, twiggy texture.

3. Winter colour

Deciduous hedges are often beautiful in winter, when their shape is more clearly visible. Unclothed, the same hawthorn boundary hedge becomes warmer and richer in colour and, like all hedges, will be a haven for nesting birds.

4. Windows

Gaps cut into a hedge, like this one at Cranborne Manor in Dorset, frame the view on the other side. It's a technique that can be used in any size garden, drawing in a snippet of something special while hiding other, less picturesque bits.

5. Corridors

Yew makes wonderful internal walls as here, at Cranborne Manor, creating an axial corridor between one part of the garden and another. Clipped finials at intervals along its length slow the pace and add a note of grandeur.

Arne Maynard is a leading garden designer based in London and Monmouthshire

Hedges

and how to use them

They can be one of the most versatile design tools in your garden. So what are the best ways to make the most of them?

WORDS ARNE MAYNARD PHOTOGRAPHS BRITT WILLOUGHBY DYER

Hedging plants

Arne Maynard chooses his favourite species for growing hedges, formal and informal

YEW Clipped yew has a density that lends itself to being cut into balls, cones or other shapes. To dress down, mix with hornbeam.

BOX Good for formal evergreen hedges or mix with hornbeam for an informal hedge: one box to every two hornbeams. Use the tall-growing box cultivar *Buxus sempervirens* 'Handsworthii'.

BEECH Has a formal feel that makes it best used alone or with copper beech. Worth growing for the wonderful depth of colour in autumn when the leaves turn.

COPPER BEECH A degree more formal than green beech, but dramatic and effective in the right situation.

HORNBEAM Excellent for deciduous hedges; less formal than beech and equally good mixed with other varieties.

HAWTHORN This makes a lovely deciduous country hedge, alone or with other native plants. With age it becomes dense and lichened and is beautiful in winter.

FIELD MAPLE Another lovely deciduous native plant, with autumn colour and cinnamon-coloured twigs in winter. Good alone or mixed with holly in a country hedge.

HOLLY Mix with yew or box for an evergreen country hedge. In formal hedges, clipped holly extending above the hedge marks an entrance.

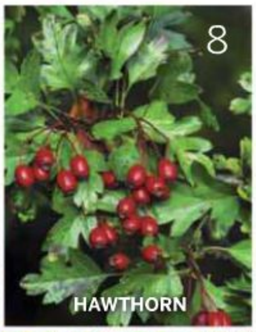
YEW

BOX

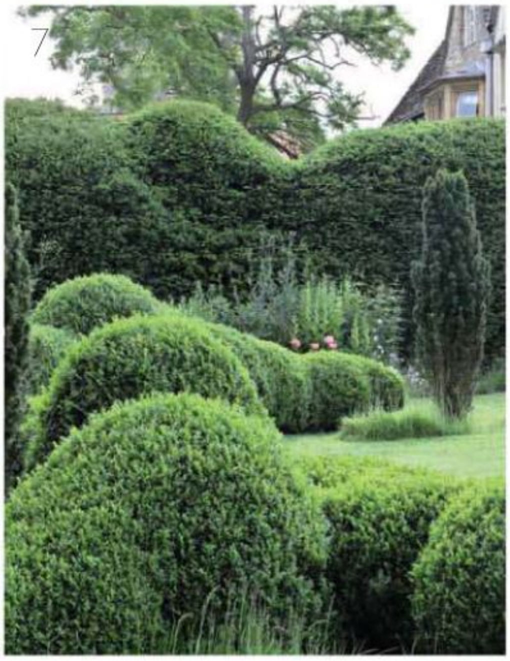
BEECH

COPPER BEECH

HORNBEAM



HAWTHORN



FIELD MAPLE

HOLLY

PHOTOGRAPHY: HOLLY: STOCK WALES / ALAMY; COPPER BEECH: DAVE BEVAN / ALAMY; HAWTHORN: NIALL BENVIE/PHOTOLIBRARY; FIELD MAPLE: ALLOVER PHOTOGRAPHY/ALAMY.

Formal or country, precisely clipped or encouraged to bulge, hedges are among the most versatile of design tools for introducing structure and drama to a garden.

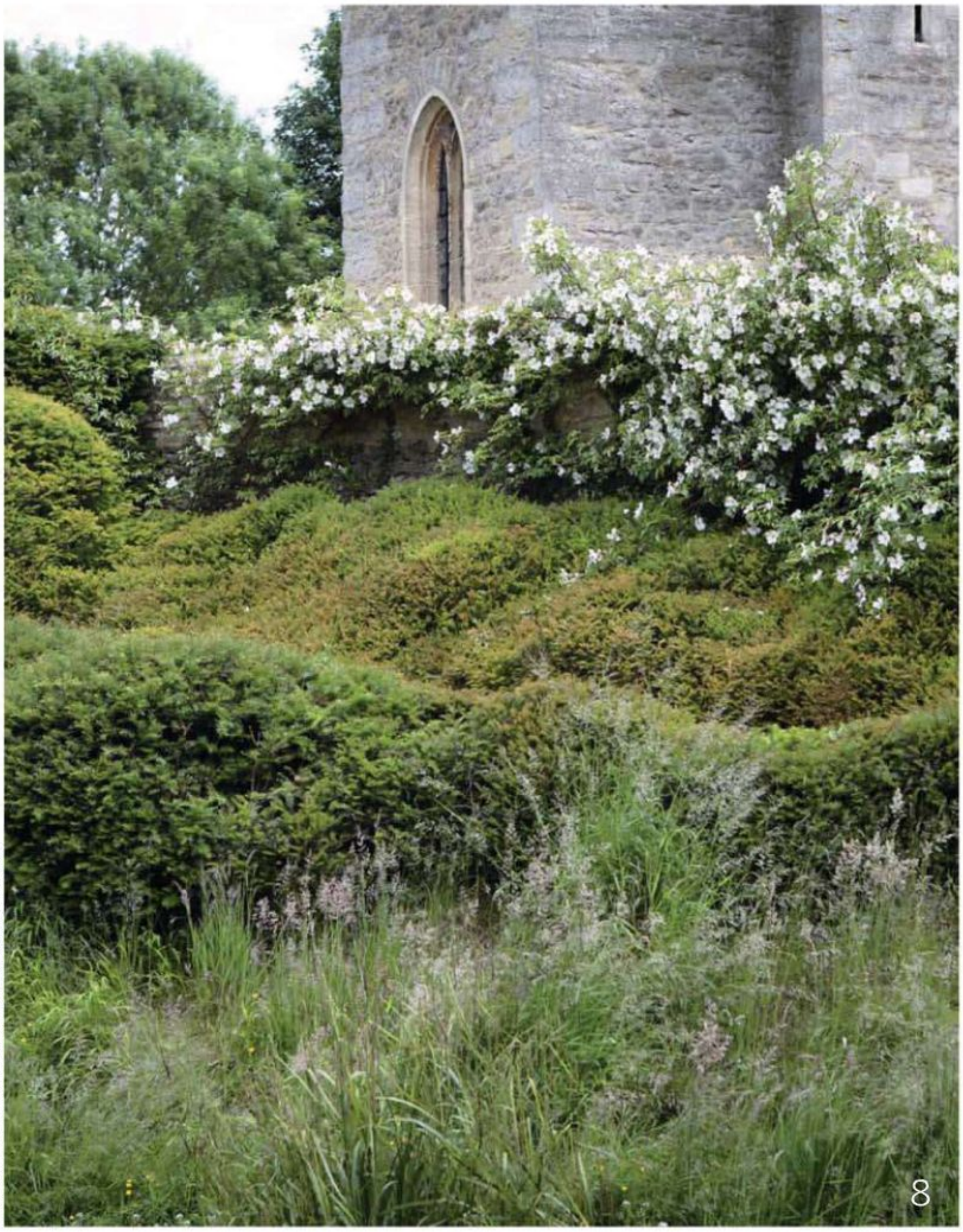
Medium to large hedges of 1.2m and higher can be put to an almost infinite number of uses, compartmentalizing, establishing axes and defining a route around the garden.

Context and choice of materials is important. Boundary hedges in particular need to sit comfortably with what adjoins them. In a country setting, hornbeam, beech or field maple work well. A mix of two species makes a tapestry hedge that breaks any sense of formality. In towns, formal hedges often look better, and box, yew or copper beech will help you achieve this.

You can completely change the feel of a hedge by the way you clip it. A country hedge with a rounded top will look right in a rolling rural landscape. On the other hand, formal, square-cut hedges often suit city gardens.

Internal hedges are an excellent way to divide both rural and urban gardens. They can be more formal than boundary hedges. Height is important here – the hedge must be in proportion to the scale of the building and surrounding walls.

A hedge doesn't have to go from A to B; it can snake through the garden or step in and out to



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PHOTOGRAPHY 6 WILLIAM COLLINSON 7 JASON INGRAM 8 NICK HAND

6. Living walls

The architectural qualities of hedges can benefit even small gardens. Clipped buttresses of yew in the tiniest space can enclose a seat or create a niche for a pot or sculpture.

7. Quirky character

Originally clipped in lines, these yew and box hedges were radically cut-into and extra plants were added in places to create an irregular shape. In less than ten years they have taken on the wonderful, misshapen look of ancient hedges.

8. An aged effect

Despite their well-established appearance, the layers of yew hedging in front of this church wall were newly planted in different sizes and clipped together. Swags of Cooper's Burmese rose (*R.* 'Cooperi') intensify the effect.

widen or narrow areas. In some places you might allow views over the hedge, in others you may want complete enclosure.

Hedges can also be a useful way to mask parts of the garden. Where a boundary wall is in poor shape, for example, a parallel hedge will hide it.

Never be afraid to experiment. The fact that you can cut and shape hedges in so many ways is what makes them such a wonderful device for adding drama to your garden. Buttresses cut into the hedge at an entrance, for example, will have the effect of drawing you in.

When I want to create a garden around an old house, I manipulate the way I plant hedges to simulate great age. I use plants of different sizes together, planting them out of line and adding some here and there to create a bulge. Inspired by the ancient hedges at Corsham Court, I used this technique to create new hedges in an Oxfordshire garden (picture 7, opposite page). There we also transformed a hedge that had been clipped in straight lines for years, quite out of keeping with the house's age. We used chainsaws to cut great sweeps from the tops and sides of the hedges. They looked awful for a couple of years, but now they have exactly the feeling of antiquity I wanted.□

NEXT TIME Arne returns in February with design ideas for pleached trees and allées.

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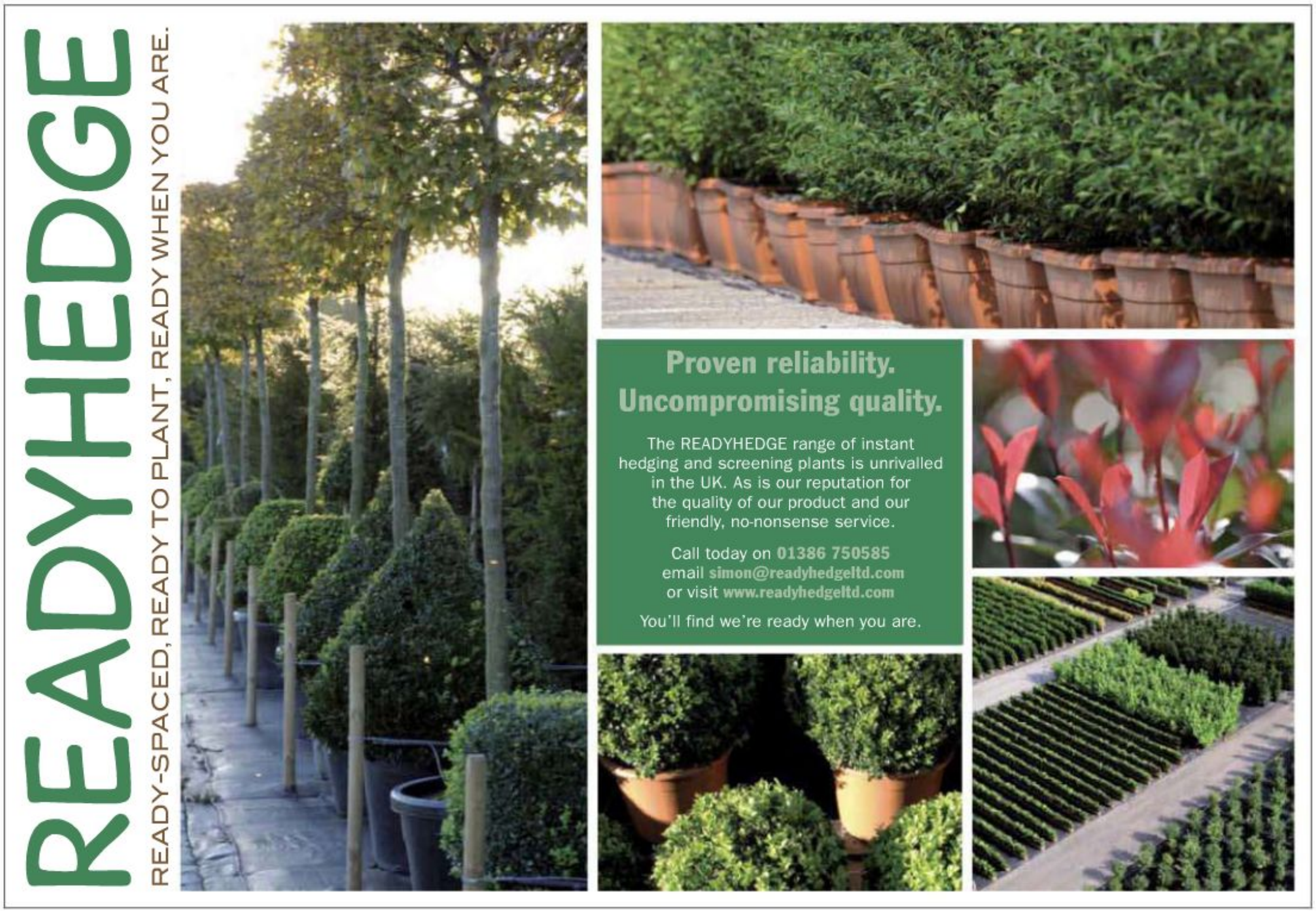

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Russell Page
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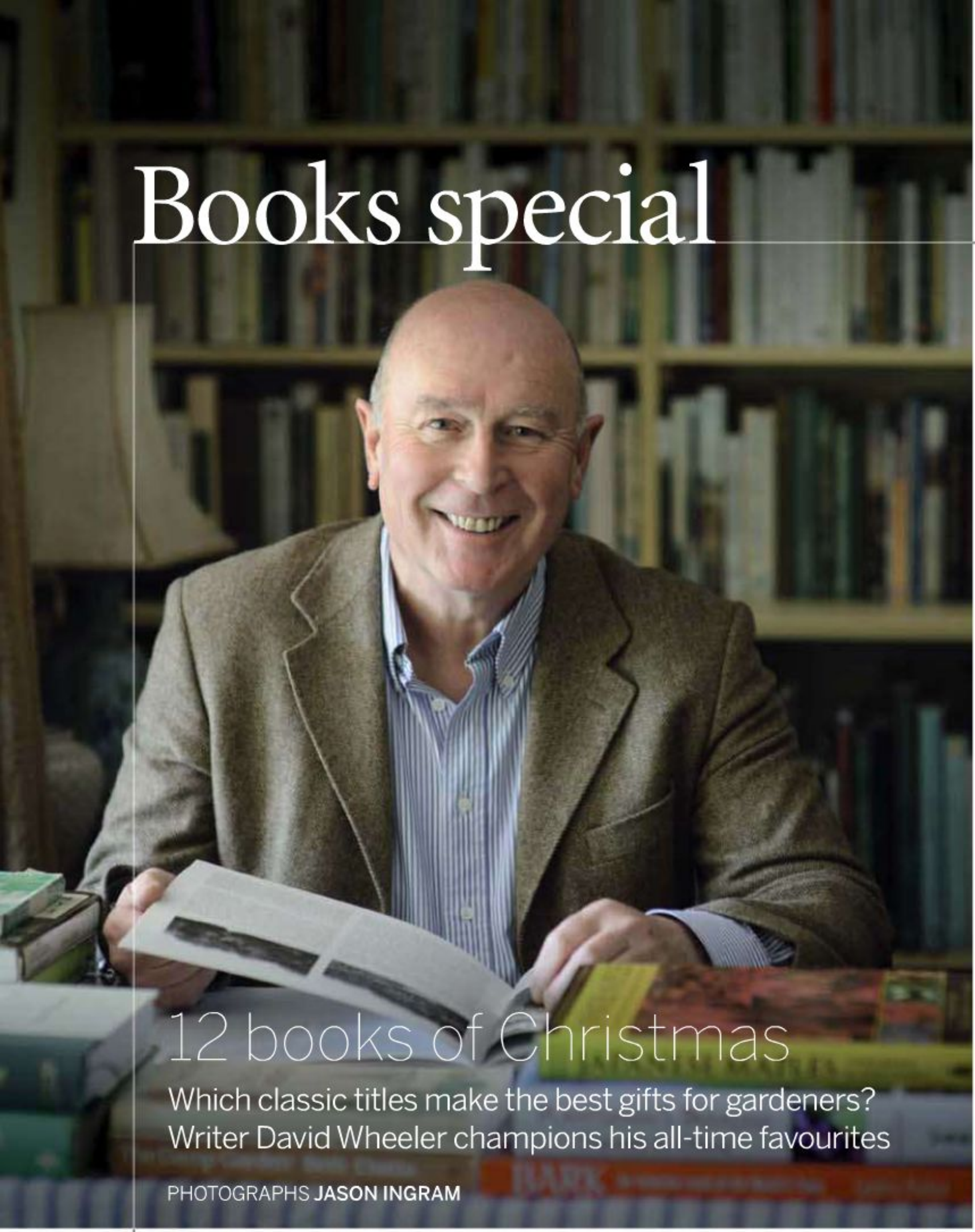
Thoughtful Gardening
The Dry Garden
Beth Chatto
The Damp Garden
Beth Chatto
The Gardener's Book of Colour
Andrew Lawson
The English Garden Abroad
Charles Quest-Ritson

What are the all-time classic books that gardeners should have on their Christmas wish list? Writer David Wheeler names a dozen favourites on page 90.

JASON INGRAM

Books special



12 books of Christmas

Which classic titles make the best gifts for gardeners? Writer David Wheeler champions his all-time favourites

PHOTOGRAPHS **JASON INGRAM**

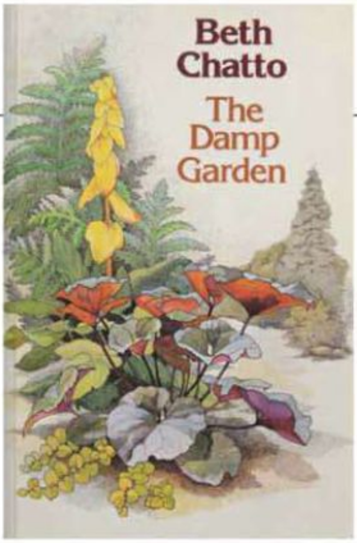
For 30 years my professional life has revolved around gardening – especially its literature. In that time I've read, I guess, one garden-related book a week (do the sum yourself), not to mention around several dozen magazine articles each month and a barrage of manuscripts sent to me by hopeful scribes. Consider too the countless reference books I consult daily, and you'd think I'd know more about the subject than I do. Take heart, though: no one knows it all. Selecting a mere dozen titles hasn't been easy, but my choice aims for diversity (a vital garden component), reliability and good writing.

FOR WILDFLOWER LOVERS

***Flora Britannica* by Richard Mabey**

Gardeners with some cognisance of their native flora have a head start. They will have noticed how certain things thrive where others fail and soon come to understand why. In a distinguished line that follows Gilbert White, John Clare and Geoffrey Grigson, Richard Mabey leads today's field. For once the word 'indispensable' earns its place: *Flora Britannica* is a work of outstanding, readily accessible and thoroughly enjoyable scholarship. It's the kind of book about which many other books could be written and its absence from a gardener or nature-lover's shelves is unimaginable.

David Wheeler is the founding editor of the gardening journal *Hortus*. He was awarded the prestigious Veitch Memorial Medal by the RHS in 2009 for his exceptional contribution to horticulture. His gardens at Bryan's Ground in Herefordshire are regularly open to the public.



FOR PLANTING INSPIRATION

***The Damp Garden* by Beth Chatto**

This became my bible when I moved to wet Wales in 1987, superceding another of Beth Chatto's books, *The Dry Garden*, which had been similarly important to me when I worked light sandy soil in Surrey. Both expound the characteristics of these potentially tricky sites, and each lists numerous plants best suited to them.

I couldn't part with my heavily annotated first editions, as they chronicle my early successes and failures – jottings to learn from still.

FOR PLANTING DESIGN IDEAS

***The Gardener's Book of Colour* by Andrew Lawson**

The author trained as a painter before establishing himself as one of today's most respected garden photographers. This book was a revelation when first published in 1996, demonstrating to flower gardeners the quirks of saturation, tone, light, colour distribution, density, shape and texture. He writes lucidly about colours, detailing their intricate composition before going on to suggest plants for each season in those colours. More follows on the mixing of colours (why some work and some don't), and on harmony and contrast – intangible qualities which, when mastered, can lead to near perfection.

FOR INSPIRATIONAL PLANTS

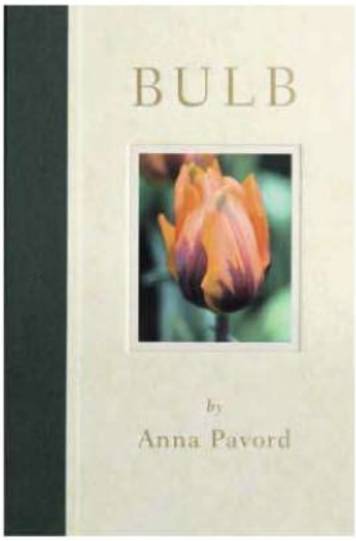
***Bulb* by Anna Pavord**

The autumn bulb delivery is a high point in my year, and like Marion Cran, writing in 1929, I want to set about the 'adorable misery' of planting them as soon as they arrive – though I seldom do. Books about bulbs are many and magnificent and a good dozen are reliable, well-thumbed old friends. In choosing Anna Pavord's *Bulb* I was won over by her stories about bulbs, her personal experiences of growing them, and her sheer enjoyment of them, which she passes on with fluency and enthusiasm.

FOR BEAUTIFUL TREES

***Japanese Maples* by JD Vertrees**

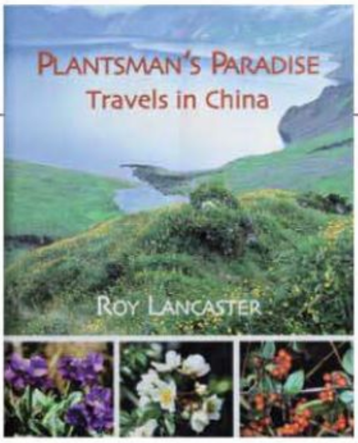
When starting a five-acre arboretum ten years ago I planted initially for autumn colour, slowly building small collections of sorbus, prunus, liquidambars, birch, cornus, cotinus and – supremely – acers. With the creation of sheltered areas I began to experiment with Japanese maples, smaller and often more intensely coloured in autumn than some of their bigger cousins. I was helped by US nurseryman and acerholic JD Vertrees, whose *Japanese Maples* meticulously details and illustrates some 600 different kinds. With a mere 30 acquired, I have far to go.



FOR PLANTHUNTING TALES

***Plantsman's Paradise: Travels in China* by Roy Lancaster**

Listening to Roy Lancaster talk about maples (indeed, about any plants) is both edifying and entertaining. His 2008 *Plantsman's Paradise*, a revised and more generously illustrated reprint of his 1989 *Travels in China*, was one of only two books I took with me into hospital some years ago, knowing it would help assuage my wanderlust while feeding me the plant-talk I knew I'd miss out on. It's remarkable in every way: skilfully and passionately written, well printed and as up to date as anything on a hugely diverse flora that has contributed exquisitely to western gardens.



FOR DESIGN IDEAS

***The Education of a Gardener* by Russell Page**

Page (1906-85) was a designer inspired by plants. He was sensitive to site, soil and climate, but a glance at the headings in his 1962 classic reveals his first loves: trees, shrubs, flowers, water. He worked much in Italy, Switzerland and the south of France, largely for moneyed clients with enough land for large-scale ▷

> *“Listening to Roy Lancaster talk about maples is both edifying and entertaining”*

on David's list

Flora Britannica by Richard Mabey, 1996. Chatto & Windus, £40 *or reader offer price of £36, with free P&P**.
ISBN 978-1856193771

The Damp Garden by Beth Chatto. 1998 edition, Orion, £8.99 *or £7.99**.
ISBN 978-0752816432

The Gardener's Book of Colour by Andrew Lawson. 2004 ed, Frances Lincoln, £18.99 *or £17.50**.
ISBN 978-0711220546

Bulb by Anna Pavord, Mitchell Beazley, 2009. £30 *or £27**.
ISBN 978-1845334154

Japanese Maples by JD Vertrees, Timber Press. 2010 ed. £35 *or £32.50**.
ISBN 978-0881929324

Plantsman's Paradise: Travels in China by Roy Lancaster, Antique Collectors' Club, 2008. £39.95 *or £37**.
ISBN 978-1851495153

The Education of a Gardener by Russell Page. Collins, 1962. See *Out of print books*, below.

The Edwardian Garden by David Ottewill, Yale University Press, 1989. See *Out of print books*.

The English Garden Abroad by Charles Quest-Ritson, Viking, 1992. See *Out of print books*.

Thoughtful Gardening by Robin Lane Fox, Particular Books/Penguin, 2010. £25 *or £22.50**.
ISBN 978-1846142895

The Gardener's Year by Karel Capek, 1939. Paperback edition, 2005, Continuum, £19.99 *or £19.50**.
ISBN 978-0826486257

Bark by Cédric Pollet, Frances Lincoln, 2010. £30 *or £27**.
ISBN 978-0711231375

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▷ schemes. But 'Nothing,' he wrote, 'gives me more pleasure than to see a good plant used with skill and taste' – words that guarantee splendour in the smallest of garden spaces.

FOR GARDEN HISTORY

***The Edwardian Garden* by David Ottewill**

A book that narrows the focus, concentrating on a decade of grandiloquence, a 'golden afternoon' between the death of Queen Victoria and the outbreak of the First World War in 1914. The Arts and Crafts Movement flourished, re-inventing the 17th-century formal garden. Our own house and garden of 1911-13 is one of its minor fruits, and Ottewill's delightfully nuanced and superbly illustrated book of 1989 might have been written for us.

FOR INSPIRATIONAL GARDENS

***The English Garden Abroad* by Charles Quest-Ritson**

This moves some of the same story to Europe, following British and American expatriates who fled to the Mediterranean, Tuscany and the Italian Lakes 'in pursuit of fashion, health and climate'. Quest-Ritson delves deep and wide, unearthing stories of the mighty gardening endeavours that gave prominence to the likes of McEacharn's Villa Táranto, Acton's La Pietra and, more recently, Vico Morcote, made by Sir Peter Smithers. Like some ancient wisteria and its supporting pergola, this book fuses racy social history with supreme plantsmanship.

> "The Gardener's Year *is for those who like their gardening leavened with a shot of whimsy*"

BULB by Anna Pavord
FLORA BRITANNICA
RICHARD MABEY
JAPANESE MAPLES
THE EDWARDIAN GARDEN
PLANTSMAN'S PARADISE
Travels in China
BARK An Intimate Look at the World's Trees Cédric Pollet

FOR THE BEST GARDEN WRITING

***Thoughtful Gardening* by Robin Lane Fox**

Now some bedtime reading of the very best kind. I seldom see the *Financial Times*, so am especially welcoming of Lane Fox's new book, a well-linked seasonal sequence that brings together around 80 of the Saturday columns he has written for that newspaper during an unbroken 40-year period. As fellow and tutor in ancient history at Oxford's New College (where he is also garden master), Lane Fox's garden writing hardly qualifies as the day job, yet he has somehow found the time to explore a fabulously disparate world that reflects the book's subtitle: *great plants, great gardens and great gardeners.*

FOR HUMOUR

***The Gardener's Year* by Karel Capek**

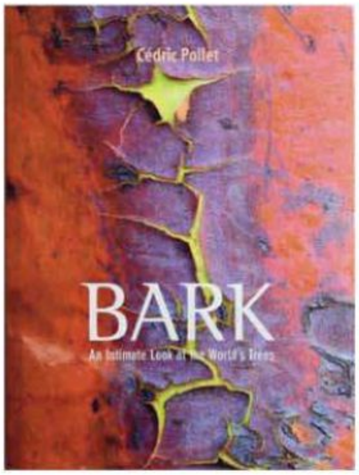
A Czech writer of science fiction, novels, detective stories, fairy tales and plays, towards the end of his life Capek (1890-1938) explored the brutality of fascist dictatorships. In a lighter vein, *The Gardener's Year* is for those who like their gardening leavened with a shot of whimsy. My 1951 copy is the 14th impression of a work first published in English 20 years earlier. Its success partly lies in his brother Josef's illustrations – droll period pieces reminiscent of Osbert Lancaster's newspaper cartoons. I re-read it with pleasure every couple of years.

FOR BOTANICAL THRILLS

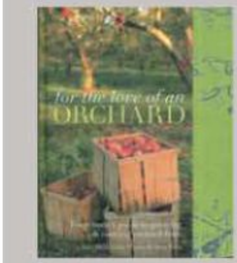
***Bark* (2010) by Cédric Pollet**

I wish there was space to extol the glories of rosarians Graham Stuart Thomas, David Austin and Peter Beales, or of fruit and veg experts Lawrence Hills, Joan Morgan, FA Roach and Tom Petherick.

I wish too that I could have invoked historical narratives by John Dixon Hunt, Penelope Hobhouse and Jane Brown. Instead, I sign off with a bit of botanical pornography: Cédric Pollet's *Bark*. It's outrageously beautiful, stunningly revealing and wonderfully instructive. You'll never look at trees the same way again.□



GARDENS ILLUSTRATED's *10 favourite books of 2010*



FOR THE LOVE OF AN ORCHARD
by Jane McMorland Hunter & Chris Kelly
'A handsomely produced and lavishly illustrated guide.'
Christopher Stocks
Pavilion, £25 – *offer price £22.50*
ISBN 978-1862058507

GROW YOUR OWN GARDEN
by Carol Klein
'The only book on propagating plants that most gardeners will ever need.'
John Hoyland
BBC Books, £20 – *offer price £18*
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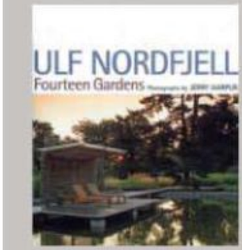

FOURTEEN GARDENS
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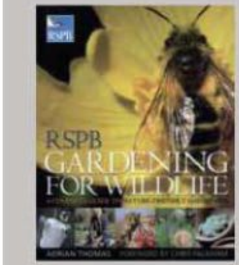

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WEEDS
by Richard Mabey
'Mabey is incapable of writing a tedious sentence… completely riveting… he writes with magnificent passion.'
Anna Pavord
Profile Books, £15 – *offer price £13.50*
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BIG PLANS, SMALL GARDENS
by Andy Sturgeon
'Inspirational and much needed… this book will be invaluable to designers and home-owners, demonstrating that "small" is no excuse for "dull".' *Rosemary Alexander*
Mitchell Beazley, £16.99 – *offer price £14.99*
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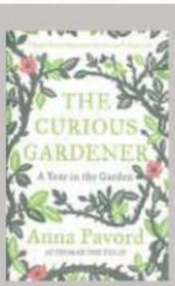
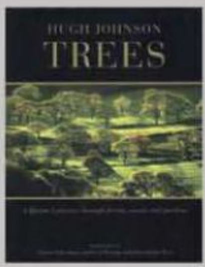


THE CURIOUS GARDENER
by Anna Pavord
'A golden opportunity to discover (or re-read if you're a regular follower) one of the most intelligent voices in English-language gardening.' *David Wheeler*
Bloomsbury, £20 – *offer price £18*
ISBN 1408808887



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'This wonderfully revised work has brought this reference book back to the fore and will continue to inspire and fascinate tree enthusiasts.' *Tony Kirkham*
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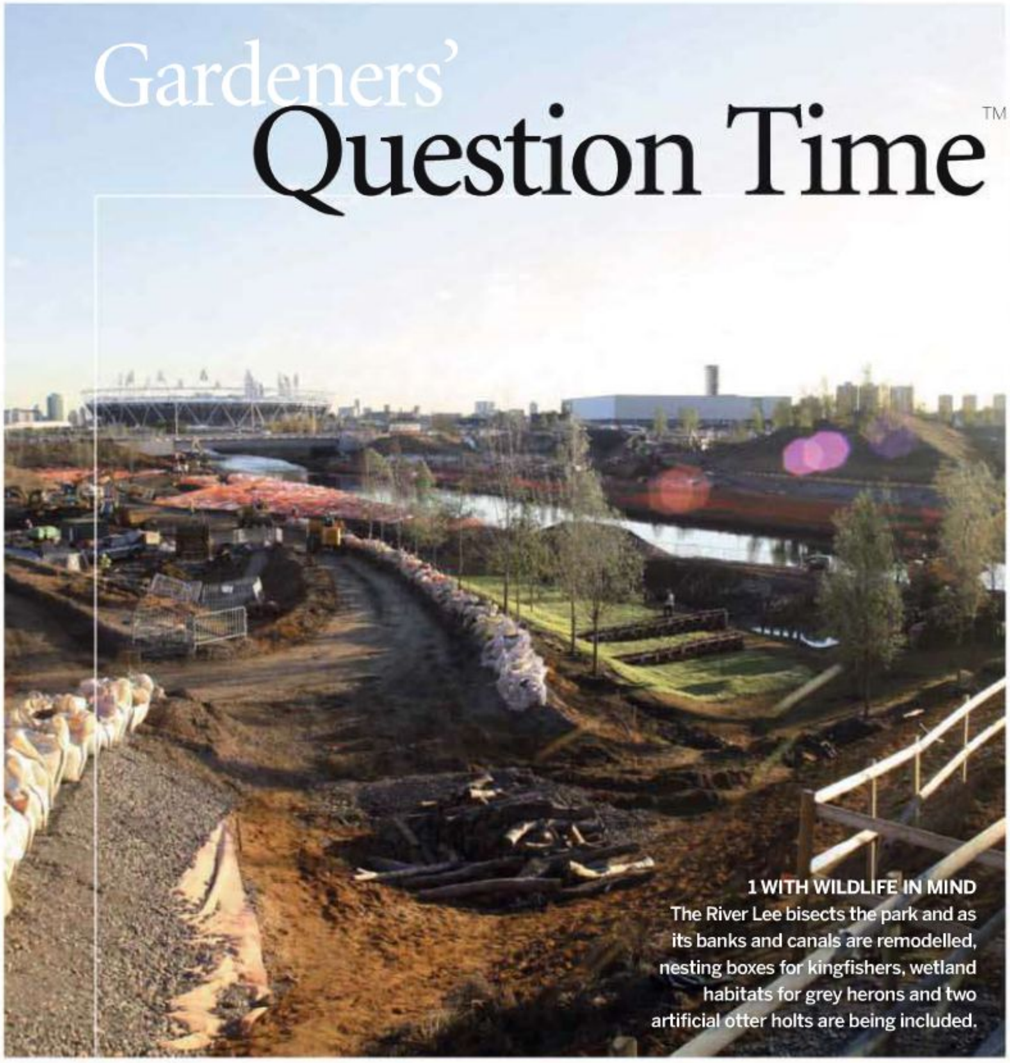
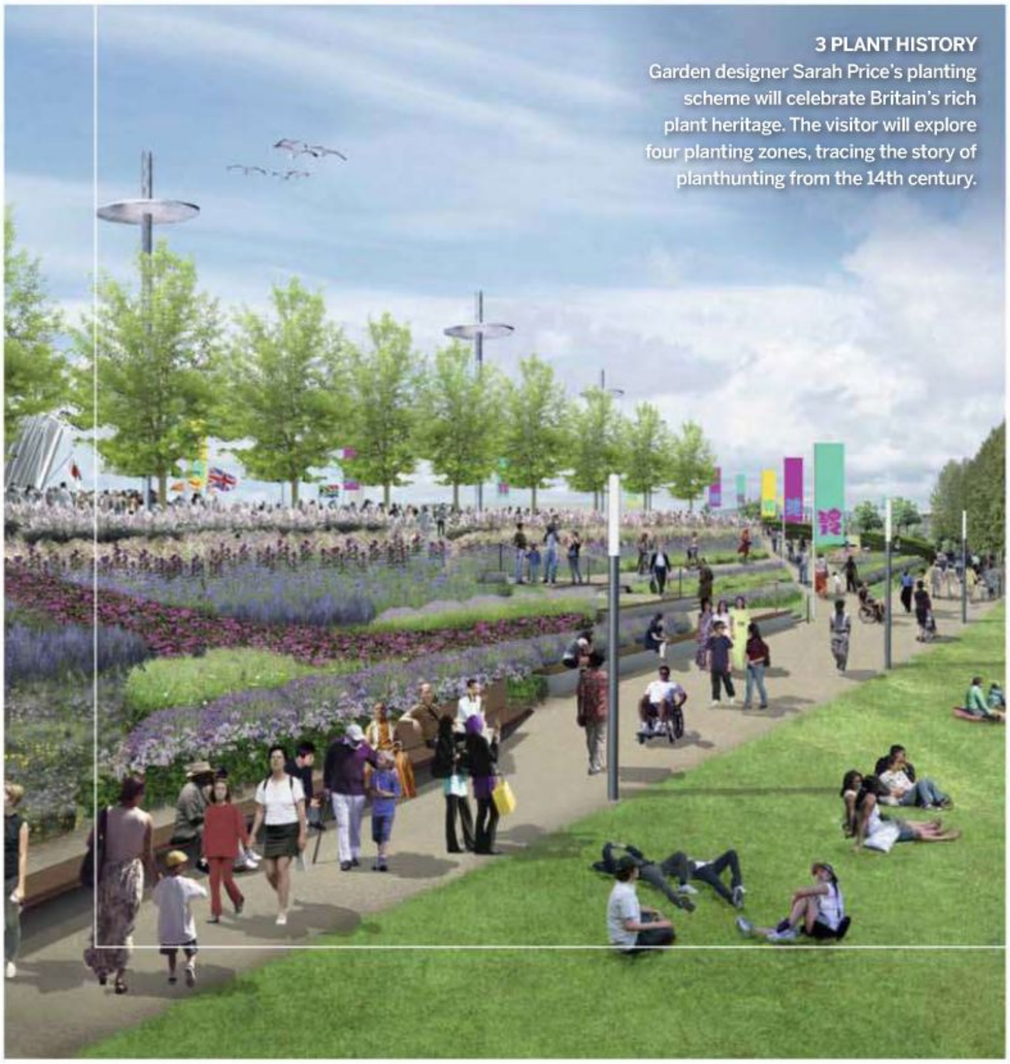
Gardeners' Question Time™ SPECIAL



1 WITH WILDLIFE IN MIND
The River Lee bisects the park and as its banks and canals are remodelled, nesting boxes for kingfishers, wetland habitats for grey herons and two artificial otter holts are being included.

2 A PLANTED LEGACY
One of the habitat recreation areas includes a wet woodland – significant because this is a rare and declining habitat in the UK and a vital home to amphibian and birds.



3 PLANT HISTORY
Garden designer Sarah Price's planting scheme will celebrate Britain's rich plant heritage. The visitor will explore four planting zones, tracing the story of planthunting from the 14th century.

4 GOLDEN GLOW
Huge annual meadow sowings, known as the Olympic Gold Meadows, will surround the Olympic Stadium and have already been trialled by Nigel Dunnett and James Hitchmough.

ODA

Gardens fit for the Olympics

The London games may be 18 months away but plans for the site's landscaping are well under way

BBC Matthew Wilson visited the site of the 2012 Olympics for Radio 4's *Gardeners' Question Time*. Listen out for the first of his series of reports from the site in the coming months. *Gardeners' Question Time*, Fridays at 3pm (repeated Sundays at 2pm).

A visit to London's Olympic Park is an almost mind-boggling experience. Across its 100-plus hectares, innumerable permanent and temporary sporting venues have erupted. Vast excavators and trucks toil around the site, with legions of construction workers in high-visibility jackets and hard hats. But the biggest surprise is the extent of landscaping and gardening that has already taken place, given that this is, after all, a building site.

Before all this, the site consisted mainly of industrial wasteland. Much of the soil was contaminated with oil and industrial chemicals. The easy option would have been to remove, dump and replace with fresh soil, but the environmental impact of that would have been huge. Instead, over one million tonnes of polluted earth have been 'washed' in a purpose-built cleaning facility, and then replaced.

It's a decidedly watery site, with the River Lee bisecting the park and innumerable tributaries and canalised streams extending in all directions. These arteries presented challenges and opportunities to the (substantial) design team, led for the Olympic Delivery Authority by John Hopkins and headed by landscape architect George Hargreaves – who also designed the Sydney Olympic Park. Working with LDA Design, they have also gathered a range of horticulturists, including Nigel Dunnett and James Hitchmough from Sheffield University and garden designer Sarah Price.

The result is a mixture of recognisably gardened spaces along with re-created habitats aimed at mitigating some of the environmental challenges facing a site that inevitably includes a lot of tarmac and roofs.

In the southern part of the park, a series of gardens either side of the River Lee will form the main horticultural showpiece, stretching for more than half a mile. The planting in these gardens will celebrate the species collected by British planthunters around the world. In the northern part of the park are some interesting habitat recreation schemes, including the largest wet woodland recreation ever undertaken.

The scale of the waterways is brought home by the sheer number of plants being planted along them; more than 300,000.

Perhaps the biggest challenge for the design team is delivering a horticultural experience that looks superb in late July – not normally known for freshness of foliage and flower – but which can then succeed in the long term. After the Olympics, the park will be integral to a new community of 10,000 homes planned for the site. That alone is an Olympian challenge. ☐

Reader offers

Win an exclusive day at Chelsea Flower Show 2011

Offer one

Tom Stuart-Smith designed the gold medal-winning Laurent-Perrier garden at Chelsea 2010, but who will be designing it for them in 2011?

Last year's winners Stephen and Jane Murray from Northamptonshire found a moment to relax and enjoy the calm tropical feel of James Wong and David Cubero's Tourism Malaysia Garden. "We had a very enjoyable day with you at Chelsea and have spent the summer planning and implementing some of the ideas we saw – even if on a more modest scale."

Here's your chance to win tickets to next year's Royal Horticultural Society Chelsea Flower Show, the premier gardening event showcasing the very best in garden design and plantsmanship. Enter our competition and you could be visiting the show on the first RHS members' day, giving you the opportunity to enjoy the buzz of results day, when the judges reveal their medal winners. As part of your day you'll be given a tour of the grounds with show manager Alex Denman and GARDENS ILLUSTRATED editor Juliet Roberts as well as enjoying a glass of champagne at the Laurent-Perrier garden. Your prize also includes RHS membership for a year.

To enter the competition please answer the following question:

Who will be designing the Laurent-Perrier garden for the RHS Chelsea Flower show 2011?

Send your answer on a postcard along with your name, address and contact details to GARDENS ILLUSTRATED 168/Chelsea VIP, PO Box 501, Leicester LI04 0AA.

You can also enter online at our website www.gardensillustrated.com.

The closing date for entries is 10 January 2011. NB. The prize will be taken on 24 May 2011. It allows entry to the RHS Chelsea Flower Show for two people. It does not include transport to the show. The RHS gift membership is for one person. Find more details on membership benefits and the Chelsea Flower Show at www.rhs.org.uk. See also terms and conditions opposite.

Offer two

10% off Sarah Raven's Christmas catalogue

Sarah Raven's Dark Dahlia Collection includes *D.* 'Rip City' (pictured), *D.* 'Chat Noir' and *D.* 'Downham Royal'.

Sarah Raven's Christmas catalogue has a fantastic selection of gifts for gardeners. We love the plant collections, such as the Dark Dahlia Collection, which comes in early spring ready for planting, packaged in a hessian sack tied with a ribbon (see left). You'll receive a gift card with details of the plants for you to give on Christmas Day.

GARDENS ILLUSTRATED readers can take advantage of a 10% discount on orders – plus you'll get a Sarah Raven Garden and Cookery Year 2011 calendar **free** with every order. Call **0845 092 0283** quoting code GIL10 or visit **www.sarahraven.com/gioffer**. Offer valid until 24 December 2010. Christmas orders by 17 December. See website for full terms and conditions.

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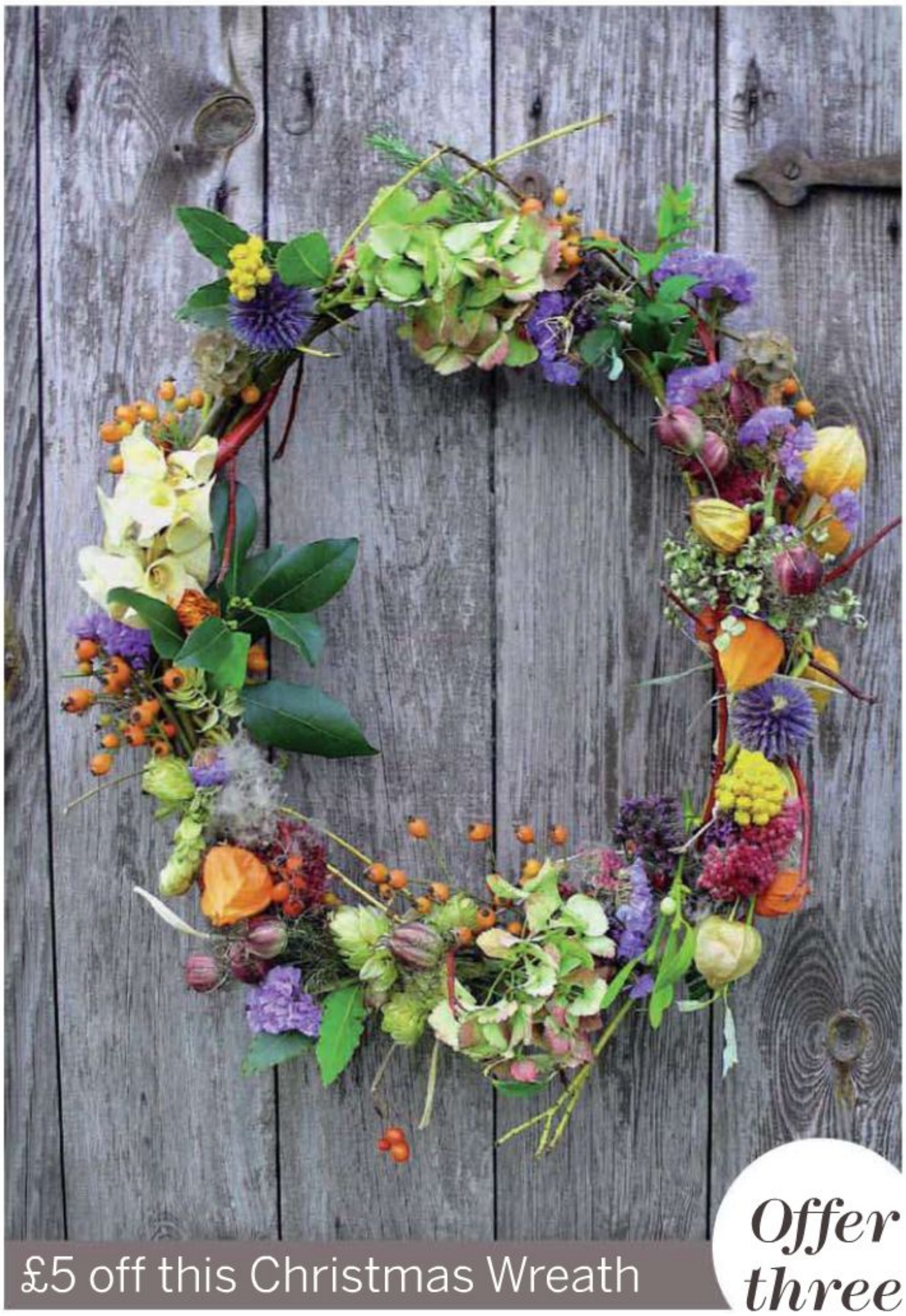

Offer three

£5 off this Christmas Wreath

If you like your decorations to be more rustic and full of home-grown appeal, order one of these seasonal wreaths from **Charlie Ryrie's Real Cut Flower Garden**. Each wreath is approximately 35cm in diameter and made from a base of coloured willows and dogwoods, decorated with posies of herbs, seedpods and dried flowers including statice, echinops, bells of Ireland, lomas, physalis, hips, hops, hydrangea, sedum and mistletoe – all collected from Charlie's garden throughout the year. Content will vary as each hoop is hand-made. An attractive seasonal message card will be included. Perfect for Christmas, the wreath will also last well into the new year.

Full price £40 (inc p&p). GARDENS ILLUSTRATED readers can save £5 on their order, paying just £35 (inc p&p).

To order: Call 01497 831177 and quote GIFH1. Alternatively go to www.cutflowergarden.co.uk and place your order, including the code GIFH1 when prompted.

Orders should be made before 13 December 2010 to qualify for discount. Wreaths will be delivered between 14 and 22 December 2010.

TERMS & CONDITIONS

1. The BBC Code of Conduct for competitions can be found at www.bbc.co.uk/competitioncode and all BBC Magazines ("BBCM") promotions comply with the Code.

2. The promotions are open to all UK residents, including the Channel Islands, aged 18 years or over, except BBC employees and anyone connected with the promotions.

3. The promoter is the Royal Horticultural Society for the Chelsea competition. The promoter is Laurent-Perrier for the crossword on 98.

4. By entering the promotions the participants agree: a. to be bound by these terms and conditions; b. that their surname and county of residence may be released if they win a prize; c. that should they win a promotion, their name and likeness may be used by BBCM for pre-arranged promotional purposes.

5. Entrants should send their name, address and phone number to: PO Box 501, Leicester LE94 0AA at either GARDENS ILLUSTRATED 168/Chelsea VIP or GARDENS ILLUSTRATED 168/Christmas Crossword according to which competition you enter. The closing date and time for both competitions is 11.59pm on 10 January 2011. Entries received after that date will not be considered. Entries cannot be returned.

6. Entrants must supply to BBCM their full name, postal address and daytime telephone number. BBC Worldwide Ltd, publisher of GARDENS ILLUSTRATED , may contact you with details of its products and services or to undertake research. Please state 'Do not contact' on your entry if you prefer not to receive such information by post or phone. Please write your email address on your postcard if you prefer to receive such information by email.

7. Only one entry will be permitted per person, regardless of method of entry. Bulk entries made by third parties will not be permitted.

8. The Christmas crossword competition is open to UK residents only.

9. The winning entrant for each promotion will be the first correct entry drawn at random from both postal and online entries.

10. There is one prize for the Christmas Crossword, which is a magnum of Laurent-Perrier Brut champagne. For the RHS competition: one winner will win two members' day tickets for the RHS Chelsea Flower Show 2011, guided tour around the show, (prize to be taken on 24 May 2011, plus one RHS gift membership for one year.

11. There is no cash alternative. Prizes are not transferable.

12. BBCM's decision as to the winners is final and no correspondence relating to the promotions will be entered into. Proof of postage is not proof of receipt and responsibility will not be accepted for entries lost, delayed or damaged in the post.

13. The winner will be notified within 60 days of the close of the promotion by post. The name and county of residence of the winner may be obtained by sending an SAE to GARDENS ILLUSTRATED, Tower House, Fairfax Street, Bristol BS1 3BN within two months of the closing date of the promotion. The winners will also be given on www.gardensillustrated.com

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15. If the winners are unable to be contacted within two calendar months of the promotions' closing date, BBCM reserves the right to offer the prize to a runner up, or to re-offer the prize in any future BBCM promotion.

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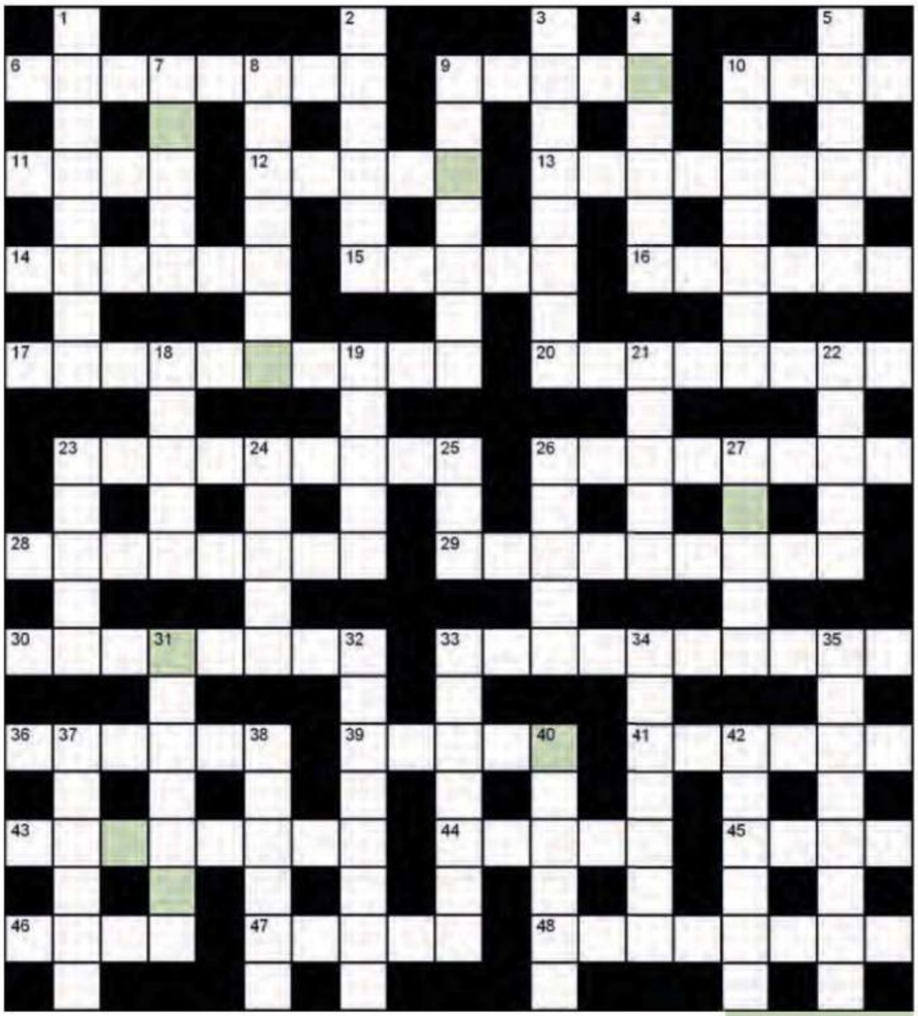
16. The promotions are subject to the laws of England.

Christmas crossword

CHAMPAGNE
Laurent-Perrier
MAISON FONDÉE
1812



Solve our festive puzzle for gardeners and you could win a magnum of champagne

ACROSS
6 eg 'Jingle Bells' or 'Snowdrift', profiled this month (8)
9 Cut back dried fruit (5)
10 In part, gardener's alternative used to kill slugs? (4)
11 Repeat: mythologically, she loved Narcissus! (4)
12 Month – in which, initially, amateur plantsmen raise *Iberis linifolia* (5)
13 Greek strongman's *Rodgersia pinnata* cultivar (8)
14 In Spain, dig out plant producing violet-blue dye (6)
15 Intended yours truly to meet insect (5)
16 Our nurseryman's favourite *Euonymus japonicus* (6)
17 Removed withered flowers (4-6)
20 *Crataegus* x *lavalleei* 'Carrierei' is our nurseryman's favourite (8)
23 Our nurseryman's favourite *Fatsia japonica* is an arachnid trap (6,3)
26 Broadleaf tree that's an old joke? (8)
28 Honeysuckle – smoked by some (8)
29 Contemporarily designed space at Broadwoodside Farm gets Trudy and Cora excited (9)
30 RHS garden in Essex – other half of Jekyll's manor house? (4,4)
33 Means of controlling temperature (10)
36 Osier – coppiced and used for weaving (6)
39 Edible mushroom – greater quantity left? (5)
41 Equivocates about boundaries featured in this month's *Design ideas* (6)
43 eg Westonbirt and Winkworth (8)
44 How a terrarium contains an essential element (5)
45 Loud bang – top of leaf missing from flower! (4)
46 The avens plant Meg twisted around top of umbel (4)
47 Such a rose symbolised a royal house (5)
48 Irritation caused by pollen (3,5)

DOWN
1 Tomato variety, partly seasonal: I can't exhibit (8)
2 Genus of 'wild ginger' plant upset a US ram (6)
3 Britain's only bird that can crawl down a tree as well as up (8)
4 First name of planthunter Forrest – and 'Farmer' king (6)
5 Catkin-bearing trees right inside Dales, perhaps? (6)
7 Japanese white radish held by supremo oligarch (5)
8 Hybrid, flowering, prickly shrub… left out of oleaster, oddly (3,4)
9 The family owning Abbey House is to reduce a tree's growth! (7)
10 In mess, quit choosing another name for couch grass (7)
18 Like flowers after pressing – perished right inside (5)
19 Divine way to find water? (5)
21 Cereal grass produced by western warmth (5)
22 As mophead hydrangea flower clusters do run all over the place! (5)
23 Like exhibited dahlias, say? (5)
24 The heath genus in generic alteration (5)
25 Broadcaster of Berryfields' bumper crop initially (3)
26 Coarse top of carrot uncultured (5)
27 Melts – what's changed? (5)
31 Plant parasite: slippery character, contemptible type! (7)
32 A variety of black poplar (8)
33 Percy, Britain's first celebrity gardener (7)
34 Ursula, creator of Southern Hemisphere Botanics – ruined my chard! (7)
35 Woodland flowers one's mean to move? (8)
37 Middle Eastern state's dreadful horsetail – not hot (6)
38 Floral decoration made with top of wet earth, shaken (6)
40 Chinese fruit tree in moonlit Chiswick! (6)
42 It pointedly makes holes for seeds, etc (6)

WIN

When completed, the shaded squares of the crossword spell out a code word – the name of a popular winter-flowering plant. For a chance to **win a magnum of Laurent-Perrier Champagne** (RRP £70), simply write the code word on a postcard with your name and address, and send to:
Gardens Illustrated Christmas Crossword,
PO Box 501,
Leicester LE94 0AA,
or enter online at www.gardensillustrated.com, before our closing date – 10 January, 2011. Sorry, open to UK readers only. For terms and conditions see page 97.

SOLUTIONS WILL BE PRINTED IN THE FEBRUARY 2011 ISSUE

NOVEMBER'S SOLUTIONS

ACROSS **1** Mums; **4** Howick Hall; **9** The Pant; **10** Union; **11** Veitch; **12** Rock sage; **13** Dieldrin; **16** Yucca; **18** Fagus; **20** Pickles; **22** Prolific; **25** Marion; **27** Ginger; **28** Choisya; **29** Westonbirt; **30** Scab.

DOWN **2** Untie; **3** Sweet flag; **4** Heather; **5** Water; **6** Crunchy; **7** Hairs; **8** Long grass; **14** Infertile; **15** Nip; **17** Chlorosis; **19** Saffron; **21** Compost; **23** Light; **24** Cacti; **26** Ozawa.

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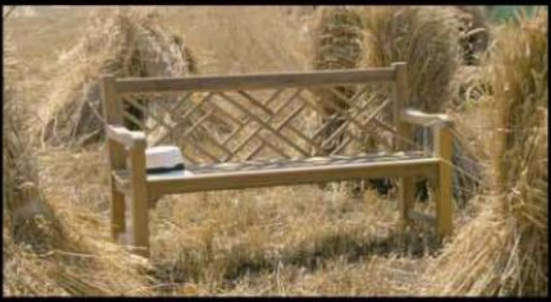

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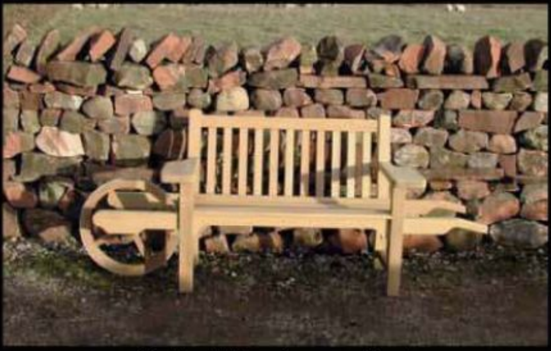

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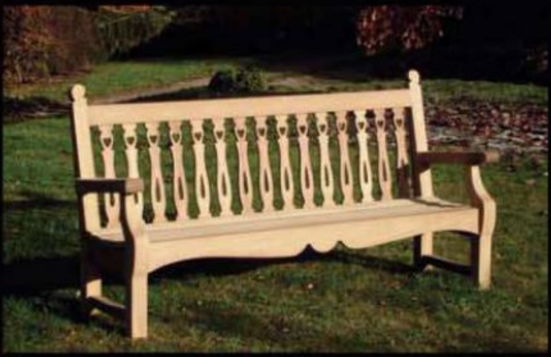

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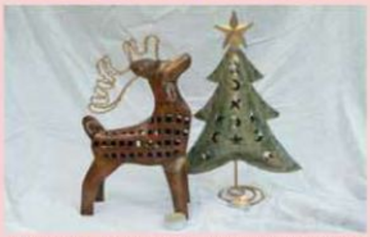

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I'M IN THE STABLES
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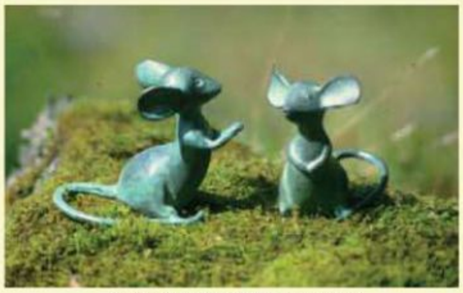
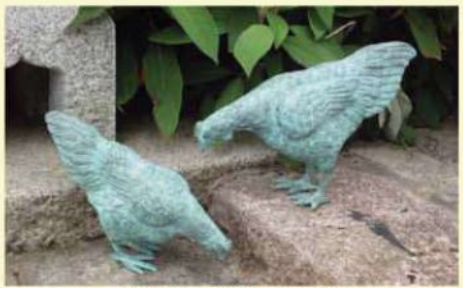


Pair of Mice 10 cms high



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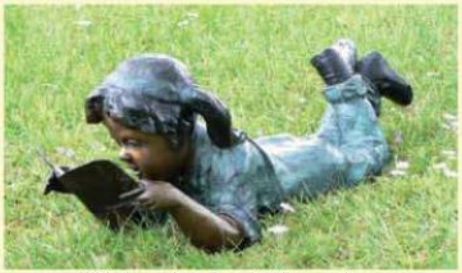

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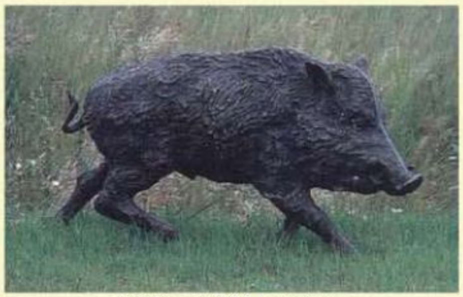

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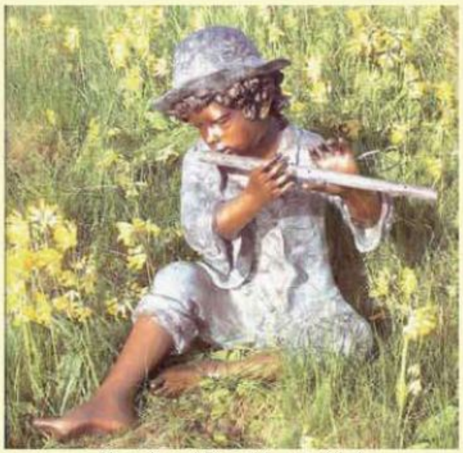

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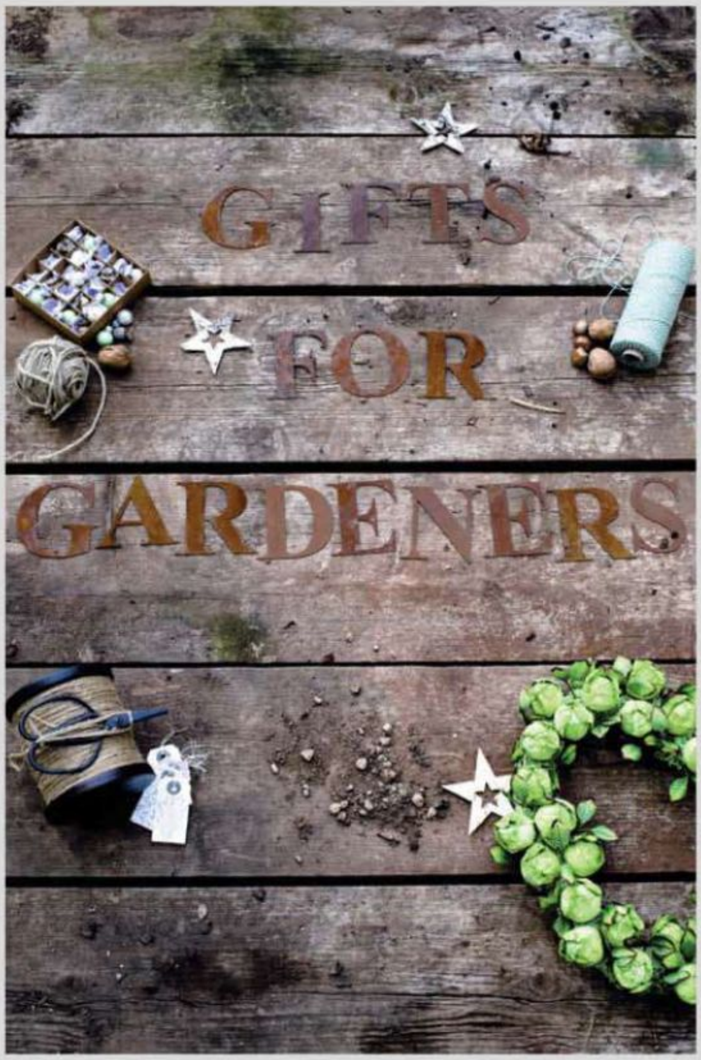

SEAN MALYON

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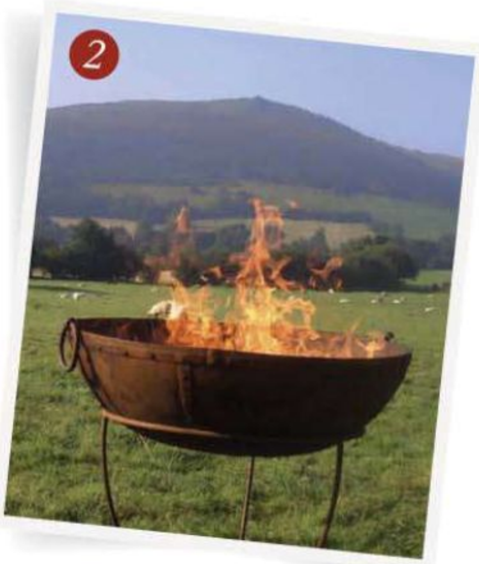

1 **Thyme Online** Gift boxed sets of frost proof glazed ceramic ornaments from Thyme make an ideal Christmas present. Tinkling toadstools (£12.99) in popular autumn browns, cool blues, and pretty pinks pop up as the colour fades from your garden. Snails creep through your Hostas, ladybirds hibernate on the shed and tree frogs climb the fence (6.99).
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2 **Wilstone's** Kadai Fire Bowl is top of the list for that unique Christmas present. It's versatile robust nature makes it suitable for any season, ethically produced from recycled oil drums the bowl comes with removable barbecue grills, stand, tongs and brush from only £160.
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3 **Sandra Christie** copper sculpture for the outdoors based on shapes reflecting nature. As special pieces for Christmas she is producing a range of hand made, all copper candle holders; good for the festive table and for summer al fresco eating. Candle holder shown is 22cm high and £35. For full range go to
www.sandrachristiesculpture.co.uk

4 **Beth Russell Needlepoint**
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Tel: 0207 798 8151
www.bethrussellneedlepoint.com

5 **Garden Options** have introduced this elegant wooden lantern to their range of home and garden accessories. Positioned in your entrance porch, it is sure to add a welcoming warm glow to your home this festive season. Please contact for more information on this and other products in the collection.
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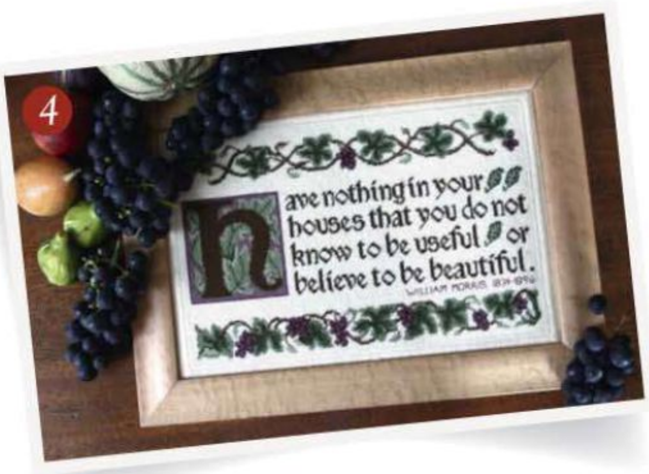
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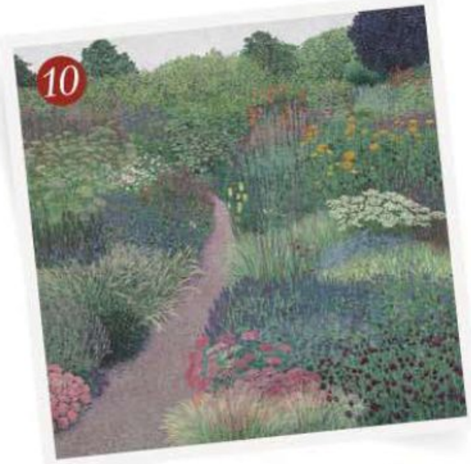

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Ness Botanic Gardens, Ness, Neston, South Wirral CH64 4AY
Tel: 01513 530123 | www.nessgardens.org.uk

Whatever the weather, you're guaranteed a great day out at RHS Garden Rosemoor this winter. Rosemoor's Winter Sculpture Exhibition runs throughout December and continues into the new year with an exciting mix of thought provoking work from a diverse collection of British sculptors, spread throughout the garden. 27 November–27 February, 10am–5pm.
RHS Garden Rosemoor, Great Torrington, Devon EX38 8PH
Tel: 01805 624067 | www.rhs.org.uk/rosemoor

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Tel: 01558 668768 | www.gardenofwales.org.uk

Richard Todd

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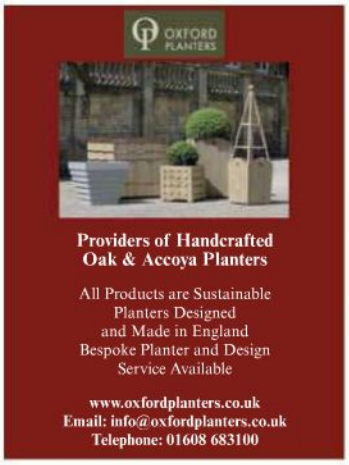
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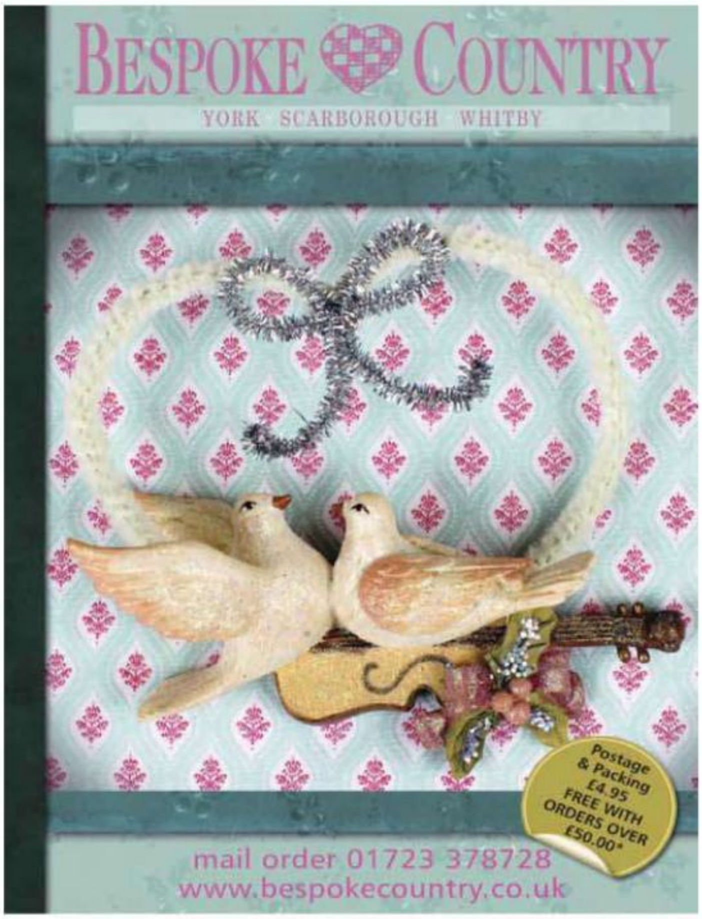

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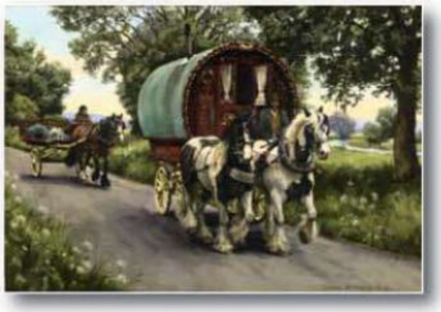

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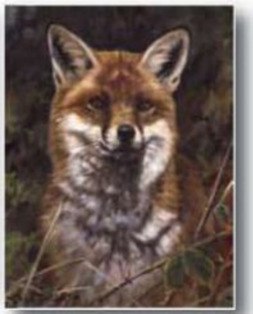

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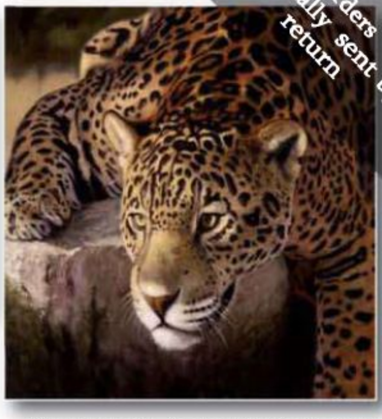

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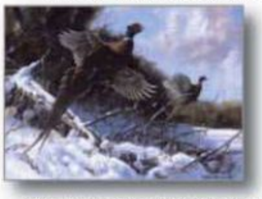

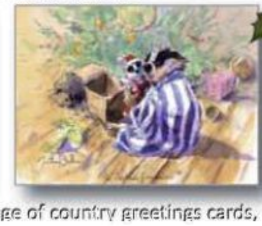

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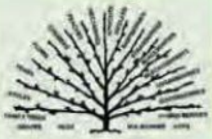

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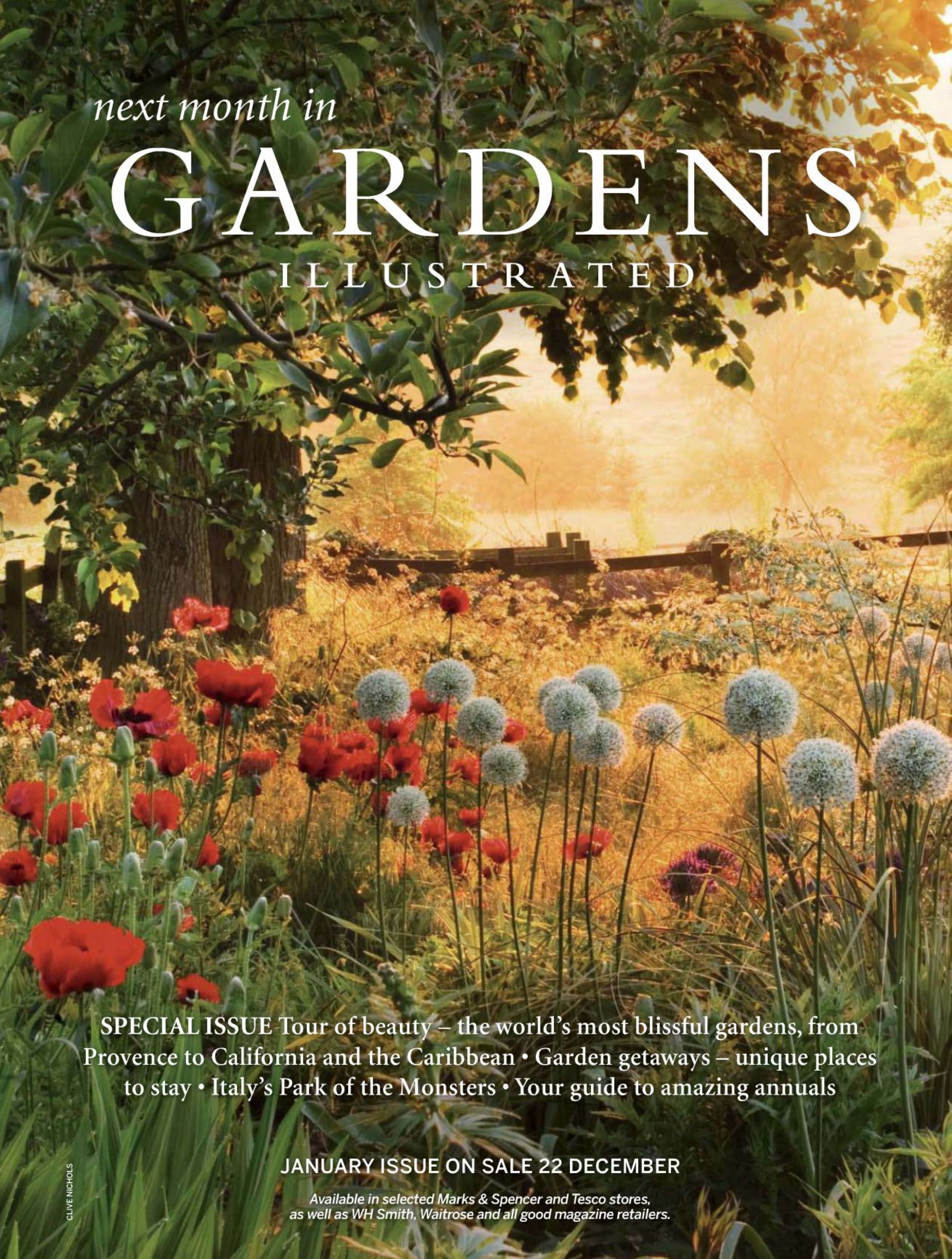

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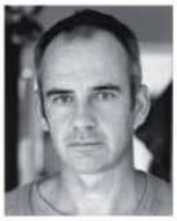
Barbed comments

Frank prefers a simple country weed to the sponsored displays that decorate our towns

WORDS **FRANK RONAN** ILLUSTRATION **MARK HEARLD**



Frank Ronan is a novelist who lives and gardens in Worcestershire

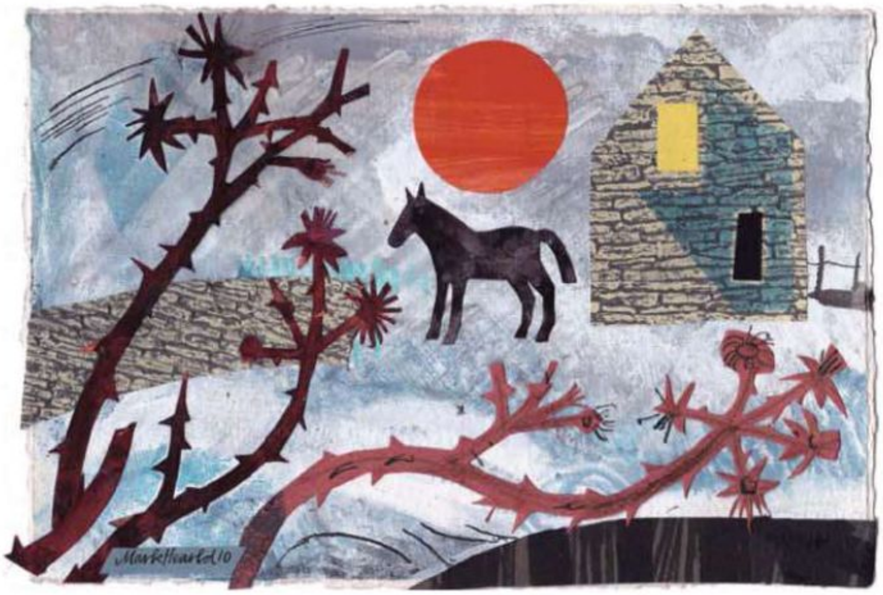
Although I avoid towns, even those as small and unpretentious as our own, with a pathological antipathy, it is sometimes necessary to quit the hermitage and replenish stocks of dog meat and claret. These sallies carry a high risk of human contact and the inevitability of witnessing at first hand the depravity of urban life. For all the plants that were lost in last year's cold, I still give thanks for those blissful weeks when snow prevented me from coming down off my hill, and anyone else from coming up it (the journey, in fact, was perfectly feasible either way to a postman, but I am more that happy to acknowledge my status as a lesser being to one of them). I would see any number of aeoniums shrivel and expire if we could aways have winters like that, and such long holidays from having to leave home.

Now, in the crawl to Christmas, I could really do with a blizzard, so that I could be cheerfully plumbing the mysteries of the chest freezer for sustenance rather than grumpily foraging on ill-decorated streets and in overcrowded shops. Our small and unpretentious town used to have cheerfully inept, old-fashioned decorations for Christmas, but these have been updated to reflect the traders' aspirations and leave you unsmiling.

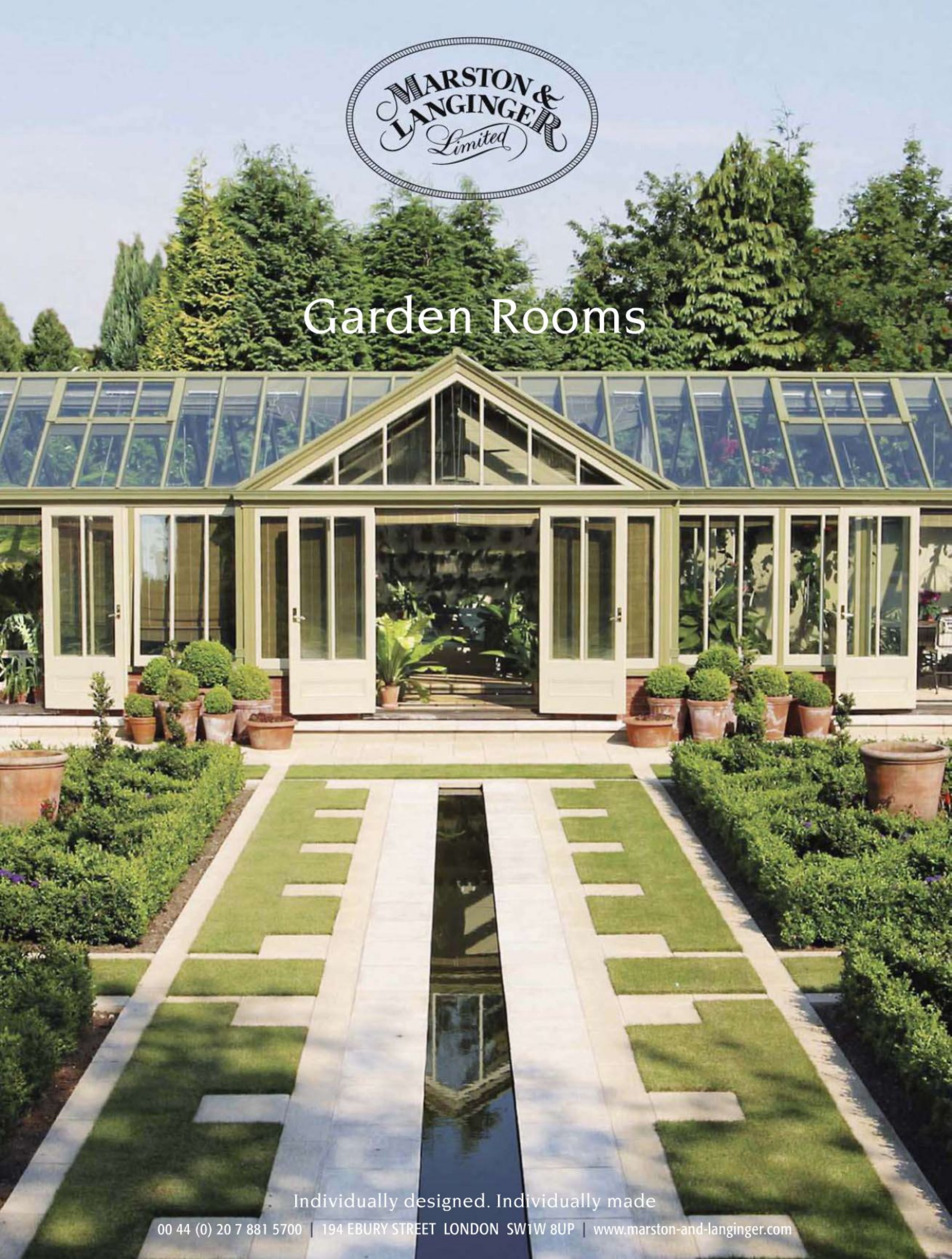
And as if a town were not intrinsically ugly enough already, ours has recently adopted a fad that is such an insult to any kind of aesthetic or intelligence you wonder how even bludgeoned townies can put up with it. It is the Sponsored Display: a weird concept that involves installing an enormous and impeccably hideous container in full public view. There are signs attached to it boasting which local emporium or firm of solicitors is responsible for the upkeep. The containers seem to be made of some kind of plastic that is supposed to give the illusion of being cast iron, and the signs they support are devoid of any of the wit or graphic ingenuity that sometimes makes advertising acceptable. But the justification for plonking these lumps of vulgarity at regular intervals along the pavement is the worse thing about them; it is the thing that offends the soul of anyone that ever loved a plant. Because they are not, apparently, billboards or hoarding or random obstacles or methods of disposal for spare council cash: they are planters; their function is to be a place for plants to grow, as is illustrated by the few, mismatched dwarf annuals that scrape an existence on their tops.

I'd love to be able to turn a blind eye, but there is one by where I park (you can still park in our small and unpretentious town, which is something), and I am newly astonished every time I apply the handbrake (which is no more than once in a good week). Am I alone in this revulsion? Is there something that I don't understand? Is it possible that all flowers are so beautiful that even the scrawniest salvia or winter pansy will shine forth and make us forgive the giant dustbin that nourishes it and the outsized tradesman's jactation that funds it? Do the tradesmen look at what is behind their sign and swell with pride and think that arrangement of lobelia and cigarette butt will bring a grateful public flocking through their door? Am I the only ungrateful member of the public? Have I been too long on my hill?

Up here, where there is nothing to advertise, a bramble is beautiful, more beautiful leafless in the winter rain than a thousand sponsored municipal planters freshly stocked from Holland, and in sunshine, could ever be. The worse thing is that you know that if they were taken away, the people who put them there and sponsored them would only choose something worse as a replacement. And if you put a bramble down there it would soon be clogged with a sponsor's plastic shopping bag, flaunting his name and trademark to the street. It is hopeless.□



> *"a bramble is more beautiful leafless in the winter rain than a thousand sponsored municipal planters"*



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